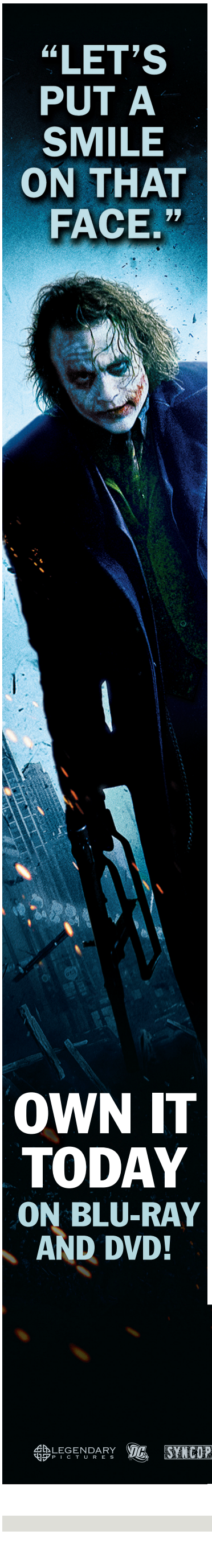

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Dion bows out early

Liberal leader urges party to pick replacement by Jan. 27 budget vote

It ended with an e-mail. After a weekend when even loyalists began musing publicly that it was time for him to go, Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion had his office issue a statement that reiterated his intention to resign as soon as his successor is chosen — but this time a lot earlier than before.

Dion had originally planned to resign in May when his successor was supposed to be chosen. But now he says he will go as soon as a replacement is picked and that a new leader needs to be in place before a vote on the federal budget Jan. 27.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Stéphane Dion arrives at his home in Montreal yesterday.

The resignation caps off a tumultuous week of highs and lows.

The man who led his party into a drubbing at the polls in October had revived his dream of becoming prime minister by negotiating a coalition with the New Democrats supported by the Bloc Québécois.

The man who had been labelled a traitor for defending Canadian federalism against separatists in the 1990s was accused of being too ashamed to be photographed with the Canadian flag.

But, in his letter, Dion took credit for Harper having backed down from some measures in his recent economic update and for negotiating the Bloc-supported coalition.

"I believe that decision was the right one and I am proud of having forced Stephen Harper to back away from his attempt to force upon Canadians his most ideological and harmful plans in these tough economic times."

MORE COVERAGE, PAGE 8

Video: What does Dion's departure mean for the Liberal party's future at metronews.ca/canada

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Historic win for Charest

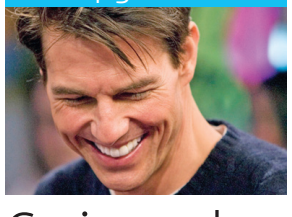
Your Money pg 15

Smart Cookies present picks

World pg 10

Bush cool to auto plan

Local pg 4



Cruise makes Toronto stop

RENE JOHNSTON/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Wayne Powell of the Highland Creek 258 Branch of The Royal Canadian Legion watches the procession from Trenton pass under the overpass at Collins Road in Toronto last night. Hundreds gathered at this overpass to welcome fallen Canadian soldiers home.

Canadians line highway in solemn tribute

SOLDIERS Outside the Canadian Forces Base Trenton, on bridges along the Highway of Heroes stretch of Highway 401, and then along the Don Valley Parkway, hundreds of Canadians gathered to pay tribute to three soldiers, continuing a solemn, citizen-created repatriation tradition.

The fallen were Toronto's Pte. Demetrios Diplaros, Keswick's Warrant Officer Robert Wilson, and Peterborough's Cpl. Mark McLaren who were killed in Afghanistan on Friday.

Master Cpl. Rob Alexander, 30, a soldier on leave, said he was honoured to see 200 people line a Cobourg bridge "to show their respect for us and the soldiers that have fallen."

On the Wynford Drive bridge on the DVP stood 10 members of Diplaros' family. The family tossed rose petals as the motorcade passed. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Video: Kandahar memorial to the fallen is a sombre landmark for soldiers at metronews.ca/canada

THE DARK KNIGHT

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City-run parking lot staff vote for strike mandate
The staff of Toronto's city-run parking lots have voted to give their union local a mandate to strike as early as Dec. 20. Some 80 per cent of the 300-strong unit voted in favour of the strike mandate, said Mark Ferguson, president of Toronto Civic Employees Union, CUPE Local 416, in a statement yesterday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Local

Cops search for gadget muggers

Police are looking for several muggers in Markham after one person was robbed of a cellphone and another lost a BlackBerry — the latest in a string of GTA gadget thefts. York Regional Police say a week ago a person walking on Kennedy Road near Steeles Avenue East was held by one man while another went through his backpack and took cash and the BlackBerry. A day later, just north of there, a man was robbed of his cellphone and wallet by a group of four people. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Tomorrow's Metro

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Mazda3 gets new helping of Zoom Zoom for 2010.

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What's online today.

Video What does Stéphane Dion's departure mean for the Liberal party's future at **metronews.ca/canada**

Video Kandahar memorial to the fallen is a sombre landmark for soldiers at **metronews.ca/canada**

Read An interview with Arianna Huffington, the 2008 Media Person of the Year, at **metronews.ca/world**

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Lotteries

Ontario Pick 3: 0 0 4; **Ontario Pick 4** : 2 6 1 3
Encore: 0664523
Daily Keno: 3, 6, 13, 18, 27, 30, 31, 35, 36, 41, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 54, 57, 58, 60, 64
These results are not official.

MICHAEL STUPARYK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A collage of signs is seen at Queen's Quay yesterday. A proposed Toronto bylaw expected in the spring will revamp a hodgepodge of rules from before amalgamation.

Toronto: A 'wild west' for signs

Love them or hate them, Toronto's signs elicit passionate views.

Some argue they are simply visual pollution, others say they provide a vital business function.

Fuelling the debate is a hodgepodge of rules that date from before amalgamation. That means signs sometimes permitted in old North York aren't allowed a few blocks away in the old city of Toronto. Or what's banned in Etobicoke would be permitted in Scarborough.

Sign of the times

Some proposed ideas are:
- Consider a ban on rooftop signs
- Require illuminated signs to be powered by renewable energy or demand the purchase of offsets
- Consider times when illuminated signs must be turned off
- Limit the maximum area that signs can occupy in a window
- License sign companies

"It's currently the wild west," said Coun. Adam Vaughan. "You can put up a sign for five or six years and make hundreds of thousands of dollars off it and nothing happens."

The city has been working on a new city-wide bylaw and has consulted with the public and industry officials. More meetings are planned for the new year, with a proposed bylaw expected to come to city council in the spring. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

AUTOPSY Zdenka (Anne) Praljak, a 53-year-old massage therapist, was killed during a domestic argument last weekend by a stab wound to the chest, an autopsy confirmed yesterday. Her husband, Mladen Praljak, 52, was taken to hospital suffering superficial stab wounds to his wrists and chest, police said.

The contractor made a brief court appearance via telephone yesterday on a second-degree murder charge.

COURT A Toronto man who is HIV positive is going to jail this week for having unprotected sex with his girlfriend without warning her. By concealing his medical status for more than a year, Roger McGregor committed a serious breach of trust, the Ontario Court of Appeal said yesterday in a unanimous decision. The court set aside a 12-month conditional sentence imposed on McGregor earlier this year and substituted a one-year jail term. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ted Rogers remembered

Media mogul's funeral today

They came by the hundreds to pay their respects to a powerful media giant — Ted Rogers, owner of Rogers Communications Inc., the Toronto Blue Jays and the Rogers Centre.

Rogers, who died last week of heart disease at age 75, was well respected by many, both at home and abroad. Yesterday, friends, business acquaintances and employees paid their respects to Rogers and his family at Grace Church on the Hill in Toronto's prestigious Forest Hill.

Canada's Finance Minister Jim Flaherty lined up with hundreds of others to pay his respects.

Family members greeted each visitor with a handshake or a hearty hug. In the lobby, a montage of photographs of Rogers flashed on a giant television screen. In the sanctuary, a giant-sized photo of a smiling Rogers at his desk greeted those who had come to honour the man who had created a vast telecommunications industry out of a 1960 purchase of an FM radio station for $85,000.

Rogers' funeral is to be held today at 11 a.m. at the Cathedral Church of St. James. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Order of Canada

- Rogers, an officer of the Order of Canada, not only owned the country's largest cable company, the Toronto Blue Jays and the Rogers Centre, but also owned a number of other media properties, including 52 radio stations, five Citytv outlets, Rogers Sportsnet, OMNI TV and 70 consumer and trade magazines.

Convicted killer in hit-and-run sentenced to time served in jail

COURT A convicted killer walked out of court a free man yesterday after being sentenced to time already served for the hit-and-run death of another man.

Andrew Harris, 26, of Toronto, faced a possibility of life in prison if a jury had convicted him as charged of second-degree murder in the Aug. 5, 2006, death of Christymay-ooran Anton-Pious.

Instead, jurors found him guilty of manslaughter last month in the death of the 21-year-old man.

Yesterday, Justice Francine Van Melle sentenced Harris to five years in prison.

But she ordered him freed immediately, telling him he had served an equivalent time behind bars while waiting for his trial. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Woman found dead on paper route

A woman found dead in a burning car in Pickering Saturday morning was delivering newspapers, her boss said yesterday. Michael Jaipaul, regional district manager for Metris Distribution Services Ltd., said Kursha Allen was apparently on her regular route in Pickering and Ajax. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Cruise-ing through Toronto

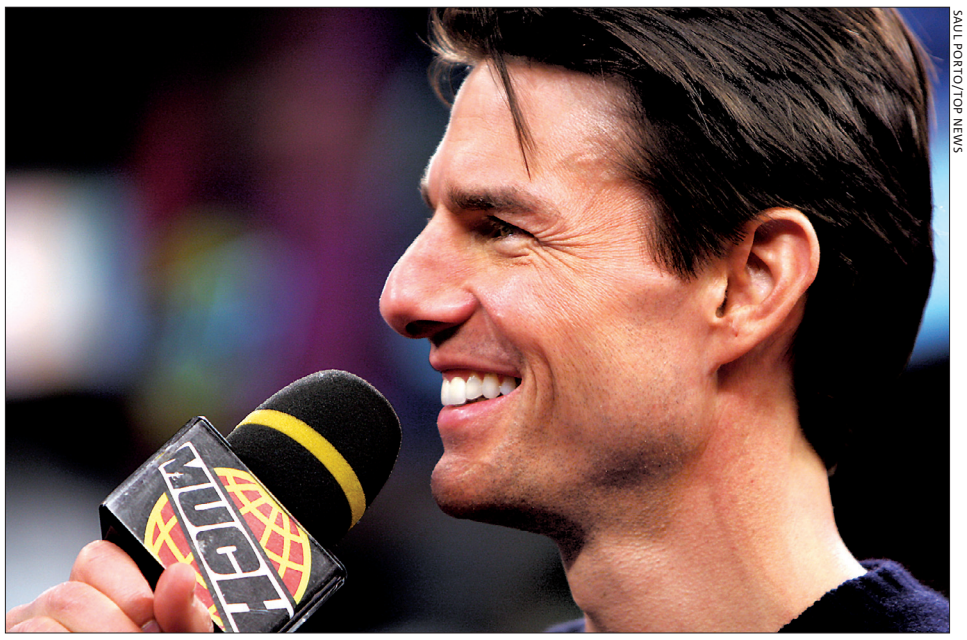
Hollywood star in town to promote upcoming film Valkyrie

There were no bombshells, no bizarre meltdowns and no berating of interviewers yesterday as Tom Cruise did a series of TV appearances in Toronto to promote Valkyrie, which opens on Christmas Day in the heart of Oscar-contention season.

Cruise's star power began fizzling after his infamous couch jumping on the The Oprah Winfrey Show in 2005 and a combative interview with The Today Show host Matt Lauer that touched on the legitimacy of antidepressants and psychiatry.

But Cruise is attempting to get back atop Hollywood's A-list with his new movie, and scheduled a two-day gauntlet of media interviews in an attempt to build buzz and charm back his old fans.

It was a very cool and collected Cruise who appeared on the set of CBC's The Hour With George Stroumboulopoulos.



SAUL PORTO/TOP NEWS

Tom Cruise smiles during his appearance on MuchMusic's MuchOnDemand yesterday. The Hollywood star was in Toronto yesterday to promote his film Valkyrie.

Hinting at the interviews with Winfrey and Lauer, the star told Strombo he's learned from past mistakes. "You just go 'OK, (I) could have handled things better,' and you just learn from it and move on," he said in the interview, which will air tonight at 11.

"I think that that's all you can do. And just focus and take care of the family and take care of my work."

Cruise told Stroumboulopoulos he no longer answers queries about his Scientology background: "I just said, 'That's it, no more, go to the (Scientology) website.'"

Cruise also appeared on MuchMusic's fan-and-celebrity showcase MuchOnDemand yesterday for a live interview with VJ Matte Babel. He's scheduled to visit CTV's eTalk studios at 299 Queen St. W. today at 1 p.m. for a half-hour interview in front of a live audience. The special, Tom Cruise: Live at eTalk, is to air at 7 tonight.

The interviews come at a time when bad press is dogging Valkyrie, in which Cruise plays Col. Claus von Stauffenberg, a German officer who led a plot during the Second World War to assassinate Adolf Hitler.

Valkyrie is being seen by many industry observers as a litmus test of Cruise's future viability as a star.

Meanwhile, several Internet gossip sites are reporting that Cruise's wife, actor Katie Holmes, is pregnant with their second child.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Volunteer guilty of molesting children

CRIME Paul Thomas was a volunteer at a city-run daycare in downtown Toronto where he formed a special group called "J club" for some of the children he helped mind.

So when he repeatedly engaged in sexual activity with a five-year-old boy, the victim was worried that, if he told on Thomas, he would be kicked out of the club and lose out on candy, prizes and a feeling of being special.

A second five-year-old boy upon whom Thomas often forced sex also belonged to the club.

Yesterday, the 21-year-old man stood in Superior Court in an orange jail-issue jumpsuit and softly pleaded guilty to fondling the boys and inviting them to touch him.

He apologized for his crimes and for taking up court time.

Justice Bonnie Croll accepted a joint Crown-defence recommendation and ordered the man's release yesterday after having served 20 months in pre-trial custody.

He must serve three years of probation and get treatment for sexual deviancy.

Thomas worked as a co-op student and later a volunteer at Blevins Child Care Centre, near Queen Street East and River Street, for a year before he was arrested in April 2007.

A psychiatric assessment arranged by his lawyer, Gina Da Fonte, shows he has an IQ of 75 and functions at a lower level than a nine-year-old child. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Limits

- Thomas will have to submit a DNA sample to police and for 20 years will be on the national sex offender registry. For the three years of probation he can't be alone with children under 16.

Report slams hospital spending

AUDITOR GENERAL The new Brampton Civic hospital could have cost the government at least $50 million less if it was not built by the private sector, Ontario's auditor general has found. Auditor General Jim McCarter yesterday released a much-anticipated probe into how the first public-private partnership hospital came to be built and how it will be financed over the next 25 years. On top of the extra construction costs, had the province financed the building at a rate in line with available borrowing rates it would have saved $200 million over the term of the project's P3 arrangement, the auditor's report noted.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Award honours journalists' fight

When TV cameraman Sami al-Haj of Sudan was captured at the Pakistan border on his way to Kandahar in Afghanistan for an assignment in 2001, he had no clue it would be the start of six years of suffering and endless interrogation.

Al-Haj, 38, was not present to accept an award for his commitment to freedom of expression at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel last night.

But his story resounded throughout a packed room of journalists and media executives who converged to honour al-Haj, Zimbabwean journalist Shakeman Mugari and Jim Poling of the Hamilton Spectator at the presentation of the annual press freedom awards by Canadian Journalists for Free Expression.

HENRY STANCU/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Zimbabwean journalist Shakeman Mugari was among the recipients of awards from the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression last night.

Annie Game, executive director of the group, said al-Haj, now a news producer for Al Jazeera, was chosen as one of two International Press Freedom Award winners because of his fight to bring attention to the injustice faced by journalists across the world.

Al-Haj was held for six years in Guantanamo Bay, where his interrogators tried to force him to become an informant against the Al Jazeera TV channel, which they believed was linked with al Qaeda.

He was freed in May of this year without a trial or any formal charges laid against him.

Mugari, 27, a reporter for the Zimbabwe Independent, was honoured for risking his life to expose what he calls a "crisis."

His criticism of Mugabe's abuse of power and failure to improve conditions for more than 80 per cent of Zimbabweans living in poverty has earned him international attention and much concern for his safety. "This is not about me but more about the Zimbabwean journalists that have paid with their lives," he said

"This is not about me but more about the Zimbabwean journalists that have paid with their lives."
Shakeman Mugari

Poling, managing editor of the Hamilton Spectator, was given the Vox Libera Award for his efforts to promote the work of international journalists living in Canada. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Teen arrested in home invasion
A 16-year-old has been arrested after a home invasion last July in Vaughan that was thwarted when the victim escaped out a bedroom window. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Housing sale put on hold

Board needs more time to study plan to sell units

Toronto Community Housing's board of directors has decided to hold off approving the sale of about 370 housing units — including 45 single-family homes — to provide more time to study the proposal.

Coun. Paula Fletcher, a member of the board, moved a motion yesterday calling for the delay, which passed.

Among her concerns is that no social housing units be lost in the sell-off.

"Are there any partners that want to come forward and look at assisting or operating (the units proposed for sale)? Does Habitat for Humanity want some of these sites? I don't know, but I'm willing to look at all kinds of things in order to keep as many social housing units in play in the city of Toronto,'' Fletcher said in an interview after yesterday's meeting.

"I want to make sure we maintain as many active units of housing, particularly going into this recession where there is a big waiting list and people are hurting economically.''

There are more than 60,000 households in the city on a waiting list for subsidized housing.

Toronto Community Housing's proposed asset sale is part of the housing agency's broader $1.5-billion, 10-year plan, which was before the board yesterday. That plan includes revitalizing 13 Toronto public housing sites — five in the first phase.

"I want to make sure we maintain as many active units of housing, particularly going into this recession where ... people are hurting economically."
Coun. Paula Fletcher

The overall plan got the green light from the board of directors yesterday, except for the recommendation from TCHC staff that calls for the sale of 326 units in three apartment buildings, and an additional 45 single-family homes.

All the units fall below a benchmark target the housing agency has set in terms of quality of housing and return on investment.

The plan is to sell the properties — worth up to $40 million — and rebuild new units on a cost neutral basis.

"It's a very big deal to sell assets. Housing is a very difficult thing to replace,'' Fletcher said, adding the housing agency needs to be very "careful and deliberate" in how it approaches the sale of its assets.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Port eyeing 2nd ferry

SHUTTLE Toronto's island airport could soon be getting another ferry to shuttle passengers on the 90-second ride across the water — even though it just bought a spanking new one two years ago.

The port authority, which operates the airport, is studying responses from four Canadian companies that replied to a formal request for expressions of interest.

Airport director Ken Lundy cautioned that a decision on whether to go ahead with a new ferry has not been made.

"There have been no commitments. It's an exploratory exercise," he said.

The port authority was in the spotlight last Friday when Mayor David Miller blasted the Harper government for its plans to add two appointees to the board of directors, thereby tipping the balance of power.

While the current ferry is working fine, at times its 150-seat capacity can be tight, he said.

"We do find when there are heavy loads, it is very cosy," Lundy said. "It could be expanded to give more comfort."

The two backup ferries, which expose passengers to the elements, date to the 1950s. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Specifications

- A new ferry would be the same length and width — 100 feet by 38 feet — as the 2006 ferry, which cost $4.5 million, but is likely to be more expensive because it would have 200 seats. It would also hold the same number of vehicles — 15.

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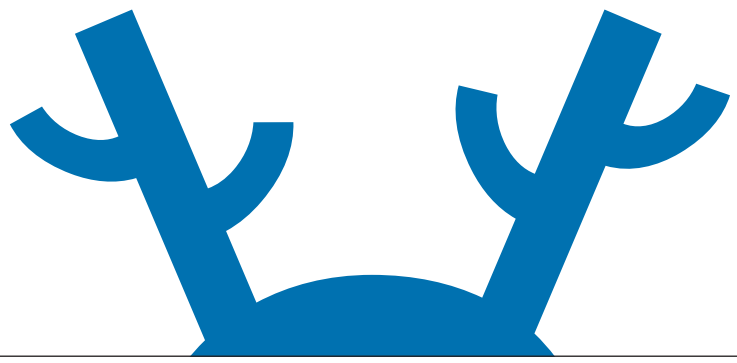

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- WILLOWDALE
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Deficit case goes to highest court

The Supreme Court of Canada is set to rule Thursday on a claim by the labour movement that Ottawa broke the law by diverting billions in employment insurance premiums to help fight the deficit. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada

Canada losing control?

The International Council on Security and Development (ICOS), an international think-tank formerly known as the Senlis Council, says the Taliban now has a permanent presence in 72 per cent of Afghanistan. The claim drew instant condemnation yesterday from Canada's ambassador to the war-torn country.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Iggy poised for leadership

Rae demands democratic vote, won't bow out of race

Liberal Bob Rae is opposing what he calls the "coronation" of rival Michael Ignatieff, painting himself as the champion of democracy and calling for a party-wide vote to select a new leader.

Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion yesterday cleared the way for a fast-track leadership contest, acknowledging a new leader is needed quickly and pledging to step aside as soon as one is chosen.

That's expected tomorrow when 77 Liberal MPs and 58 senators meet behind closed doors to give their nod to Ignatieff, the Liberal MP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

But Rae (Toronto Centre) is making it clear he won't quietly end his leadership bid, despite mounting pressure to step aside and let Ignatieff take the crown unopposed.

CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bob Rae is making it clear he will put up a fight for leadership.

"I don't think coronations are generally very successful in political parties … Most people believe it's better to have a contest, it's better to have a choice," Rae, 60, told reporters in Toronto.

"What I'm proposing has a simple name — it's democracy," he said.

Under Liberal party rules, when a leader announces his or her intention to resign, the national executive must appoint an interim leader in consultation with caucus. The Liberal caucus tomorrow is expected to recommend Ignatieff, 61, as their choice of "interim" leader to the party executive.

The party is wrestling with the unwelcome optics of selecting the leader behind closed doors, rather than letting thousands of party delegates make the choice at the convention as was originally planned.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The numbers

- In a statement issued last night, Ignatieff declared he had the support of 46 of 77 Liberal MPs, which would give Ignatieff interim leadership of the party.

Men survive night stranded on ice after crash landing

Two men from Sweden who managed to land their small plane on ice and leapt free of the aircraft before it sank in frigid waters south of Baffin Island were rescued yesterday by a fishing vessel.

The captain of the vessel that picked them up says both men were grateful to see the fishing ship approach them after spending 18 hours stranded on the ice.

A Cormorant helicopter airlifted the men to Iqaluit several hours after they were brought on board the vessel. An official with the airport in Iqaluit said they landed safely and were taken to the local hospital for medical assessments.

18 The number of hours the men spent stranded on the ice after their plane crashed into the icy water near Banff Island.

At the time the men were picked up, it was –13C in Iqaluit, but the weather was generally good.

The veteran fishing captain said his crew picked the two men up and brought them aboard in the morning, where they were wrapped in warm clothing and telephoned their families to say they were safe.

"They looked good. They were in good shape. They were a little bit frost bitten on the feet, but they were in good shape," said the captain.

Speaking from the bridge of his fishing vessel, the captain said his crew managed to spot the two men waving on the ice after they received a request for assistance from the joint rescue co-ordination centre in Halifax.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ignatieff's long road to the top

ANALYSIS A select group of Toronto Liberals, among them the Rainmaker's son Ian Davey, agreed over a private Toronto dinner in the summer of 2004, Michael Ignatieff would be the best leader for the Liberal party.

Naturally, there were hurdles, but, barring Ignatieff's 2006 leadership loss, they have been remarkably successful.

"Michael did not choose this role. He's been asked by others."
David Peterson

Now, having chosen their moment to strike and poised on the brink of fulfilment, the best of them worry behind-the-scenes, too superstitious to predict victory and aware of the everything-or-nothing cost of their gamble.

Winning means they will be remembered for rescuing a party — a country, perhaps — with courage, timing and craftiness. Davey will be the real deal, like his Rainmaker father, Keith. Or, they could be destined for failure, victims of power lust who destroyed what they aspired to save.

Ignatieff, 61, has made his move, and it can't be taken back. Losing could make of him a post-regicide Macbeth, doomed by his own sprawling ambition.

A master of backroom politics on Ignatieff's behalf seemed almost paranoid yesterday, on a day he might have been over the moon. "Oh no, no, no, it's too soon to say anything. There are too many moving pieces right now," he said, off the record. "It's been close before and we've seen it fall apart. I don't want to jinx anything."

For him, it's crucial the leadership changeover to Ignatieff be done with as "much unity as possible." for the party and country. Yes, Dominic LeBlanc's decision to drop out of the leadership race was an important piece, but still many more — potentially growing — voices are calling for grassroots participation in the choice of leader than Ignatieff people would like.

They'd prefer to see the choice irrevocable by the end of the week.

David Peterson, former Ontario Liberal premier and Ignatieff booster, thinks Ignatieff won't fail.

"Michael has earned the right to be leader," said Peterson.

"Michael did not choose this role. He's been asked by others. … If anyone says he is trying to stage a coup or undemocratic, that person is not being measured or thoughtful."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Supreme court to rule on Yukon lawyers' legal obligations
A Yukon case that focuses on whether a lawyer can stop representing a client in the middle of a trial has gone to the Supreme Court of Canada. The country's top court will hear the case between the Crown and the Law Society of Yukon next year. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Charest wins rare third term

Jean Charest managed a rare feat last night, becoming the first Quebec premier to win three consecutive mandates since Maurice Duplessis as he led his Liberals to victory against a much stronger showing for Parti Québécois leader Pauline Marois than anyone expected.

PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

As Charest cast his ballot in his hometown of Sherbrooke yesterday, he repeated the message he began the campaign with: "The backdrop to this election is the economy," he said.

The gains made by the Liberals and Pauline Marois's PQ came at the expense of the ADQ, which was pushed back to marginal territory. ADQ Leader Mario Dumont announced after conceding defeat he will not lead the party into the next election.

"It's time for me to turn the page," Dumont said.

After his speech, during which he said the ADQ remains relevant in Quebec politics and that he will remain to facilitate the transition to a new leader, Dumont hugged his wife with tears in his eyes.

Questions certainly will be asked as to why support for Charest's Liberals was more tepid than projected, and whether Prime Minister Stephen Harper's aggressive denunciations of Quebec separatists last week contributed to the healthy sovereigntist result.

Another surprising trend was a sustained lead for Amir Khadir in the Montreal riding of Mercier, ahead of star PQ incumbent Daniel Turp. Khadir is the co-leader of the ultra-left wing, sovereigntist party Quebec Solidaire, which was trying to capture sovereigntist activists disillusioned by the PQ.

Major news organizations called the majority victory for the Liberals barely a half hour after the polls closed last night, but it appeared Charest might be left with a minority government as results showing a strong showing by the PQ flowed in.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Food watchdog must do better, report says

Ontario needs to do a better job of ensuring the safety of meat products by following up on food-safety violations in slaughterhouses and meat-processing plants, says the provincial auditor general.

A number of abattoirs and free-standing meat processors were found to have "major and serious" deficiencies during their licensing audits, according to Auditor General Jim McCarter's report, and about half were deficient in at least 10 per cent of the compliance standards.

There has also been "a lack of systemic follow-up or corrective action" to address adverse results from lab tests, the report noted. For instance, a study of 48 newly licensed free-standing meat processors in the Greater Toronto Area in 2006 to look for pathogens and contamination of equipment and food-contact surfaces found high rates of bacteria.

Eat your veggies?

- Concerning vegetables and fruits, there are limited enforceable food safety standards, the auditor general found.
- When the government conducted 2,400 tests on honey, fruits and vegetables, they found adverse results for 2 per cent of the samples such as lead in processed honey and maple

"Consumers in Ontario would have a higher level of comfort if the deficiencies we pointed out were corrected by the ministry of agriculture and food," said McCarter. "It would lessen the risk."

This year, a listeria outbreak that began in a Maple Leaf Foods plant in Toronto caused an outbreak that took nearly 20 lives across Canada and potentially sickened hundreds.

Concerning vegetables and fruits, there are limited enforceable food safety standards, the auditor general found. Legislation in this area was created primarily to regulate grading, packaging, labelling and advertising.

However, when the government conducted 2,400 tests on honey, fruits and vegetables, they found adverse results for 2 per cent of the samples such as lead in processed honey and maple syrup and chemical residues in fruits exceeding the allowable limit. "With fruits and vegetables the ministry doesn't have the legislative authority to enforce anything," he said, so, they tried educating the food producers instead.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Province sitting on unused $500M: Auditor General

Ontario could avoid a $500 million deficit this year if officials did a better job of collecting tobacco taxes, the provincial auditor general says.

Problems persist with smuggling and sales of illegal cigarettes, and the government should crack down to make sure that purchases of tax-free cigarettes and cigars on First Nations reserves don't exceed their tobacco allocations, Jim McCarter said in his annual report yesterday.

"This is a lot of money that the province could be missing out on during these difficult economic times."
Jim McCarter

Government computer systems, policies and procedures are "still inadequate" to make sure the proper amount of tobacco, gas and diesel taxes are remitted despite similar shortcomings pointed out in a 2001 audit, McCarter wrote in his 498-page report.

The $500 million figure in lost revenue is an estimate based on tax rates and tobacco consumption.

"This is a lot of money that the province could be missing out on during these difficult economic times," McCarter said in a statement, noting the tobacco tax shortfall has "increased significantly" in the last 7 years.

"The existence of this tax gap remains a major issue for provincial tax coffers."

The warning comes as Premier Dalton McGuinty repeatedly says some government spending will have to be curtailed as other tax revenues slip during the economic slowdown.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Deadbeat parents face prison: Court

Debtors' prisons may generally be a thing of the past, but not when it comes to parents who stubbornly refuse to pay child support.

In a 3-0 ruling Friday, the Ontario Court of Appeal said judges have the power to order parents jailed for failing to comply with temporary support orders, made after someone has fallen behind in payments, but before a full court hearing into their ability to pay. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

News in brief

DRIVING Bowing to stiff public pressure, the Ontario government is backing down from a controversial plan to limit the number of teens who can be in the car with teenage drivers. Transportation Minister Jim Bradley said yesterday the provision will be dropped from proposed changes to the Highway Traffic Act. It proposed restricting teenage drivers to one passenger 19 or younger during the first year of a class G2 licence, with an exemption for members of the immediate family.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Airfares

ORLANDO $6
Travel Dec 12 - Dec 19/ts + taxes & fees $223

Las Vegas	Travel Dec 14 - Dec 18/wg	**$69** + taxes & fees $207
Jamaica	Travel Jan 11 - Jan 18/5g	**$88** + taxes & fees $256
Los Cabos	Travel Dec 13 - Dec 20/wg	**$95** + taxes & fees $277
Cancun	Travel Jan 13 - Jan 20/wg	**$105** + taxes & fees $277
London	Travel Dec 29 - Jan 13/ts	**$149** + taxes & fees $448

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Holiday Village Golden Beach + taxes & fees $308
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Cayo Coco 4-Star **$488**
Blau Colonial Cayo Coco + taxes & fees $199
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare, transfers and 7 nights 4-star all-inclusive accom. Departs Jan 13/vat/c6.

Holidays

Las Vegas 4 Nights **$175**
Imperial Palace + taxes & fees $230
INCLUDES roundtrip airfare and 4 nights 3-star accom on the Las Vegas Strip. Departs Dec 14/swg/wg. **UPGRADE** to 4-star Harrah's from $10 per night. **UPGRADE** to 5-star Mirage from $25 per night. **ADD** Hoover Dam deluxe tour from $69.

Niagara Falls Weekend **$149**
Skyline Inn taxes & fees included
INCLUDES 3-day car rental with unlimited mileage and 2 nights 4-star accom only steps away from the falls. Travel Jan 23/inf.

California Fly & Drive **$529**
+ taxes & fees $249
INCLUDES airfare to San Francisco, return from Los Angeles and 7-day car rental with unlimited mileage to discover the Golden Coast. Jan 21/inf/ac.

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TICO

Israeli defence officials reimpose ban on media entering Gaza Strip

Israeli defence officials have reinstated a ban on international journalists entering the Gaza Strip, despite protests from the heads of major news organizations and an appeal to the country's Supreme Court. The ban was quickly reintroduced over the weekend as part of a wider closure of the Israel-Gaza border in response to Palestinian rocket attacks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World

EU plans to cut nuclear arms

France's president has presented an ambitious European plan to the United Nations to revive global nuclear disarmament efforts. Nicolas Sarkozy says the EU wants a global ban on nuclear tests, a moratorium on production of fissile material and a treaty banning ground-to-ground short- and medium-range nuclear missiles. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Auto plan sent to White House

Congressional Democrats yesterday sent the White House a draft of a roughly $15-billion US auto bailout they aim to bring to a vote this week, but White House officials gave a cool initial response.

The measure would rush bridge loans to Detroit's struggling Big Three but would also demand that the auto industry restructure itself in order to survive and would put an overseer chosen by U.S. President George W. Bush in charge of monitoring that effort, according to a draft obtained by The Associated Press.

The White House had just begun evaluating the Democratic language, according to officials. But they said the draft didn't appear consistent with the principles behind a broad agreement to give long-term financing only to viable companies. They said it was hard to tell whether their doubts were warranted and they would continue talking to Capitol Hill representatives.

> **"While we take no satisfaction in loaning taxpayer money to these companies, we know it must be done."**
> Harry Reid

At the Capitol, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said: "While we take no satisfaction in loaning taxpayer money to these companies, we know it must be done."

Earlier yesterday, the White House and a top Democratic legislator said they were likely to strike a deal quickly on the bailout.

The money would be drawn from an existing program meant to help the automakers build fuel-efficient vehicles.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NIKOLAS GIAKOUMIDIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A firefighter tries to douse a fire started by rioters in the Greek city of Thessaloniki yesterday.

Greek riots continue for third day

VIOLENCE Gangs of youths smashed their way through central Athens, Thessaloniki and other Greek cities yesterday, torching stores, buildings and cars in the third day of mayhem after the fatal police shooting of a teenager.

In the country's worst rioting in decades, dozens of shops, banks and even luxury hotels had their windows smashed and burned as youths fought running battles with riot police. Black smoke rose above the city centre, mingling with clouds of tear gas.

In an outpouring of rage, high school and university students joined self-styled anarchists in throwing everything from fruit to Molotov cocktails at police and attacked police stations throughout the day.

The widely televised scenes of destruction are likely to further undermine Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis' increasingly unpopular government, which has been rocked by financial scandals and retains a razor-thin majority of just one seat. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lawsuit over tainted milk rejected

CHINA A court in China has refused to accept a lawsuit against a Chinese dairy filed by dozens of families whose children were sickened by tainted milk.

Lawyers involved in the case say the lawsuit on behalf of 63 defendants — including the parents of two children who died — sought compensation from state-owned Sanlu Group Co., which is at the centre of China's worst food safety crisis in years.

Activist lawyer Li Fangping says they will continue to push the case and put pressure on the dairy.

China's Health Ministry admitted last week that six babies likely died, twice the previous figure, and 294,000 babies suffered urinary problems from drinking contaminated infant formula. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Martin Luther King papers to be auctioned off
Three original documents from the life of Martin Luther King Jr., including notes for two speeches and a letter to King's widow from former U.S. president Lyndon Johnson, are being auctioned off. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tribune seeks bankruptcy protection

Media conglomerate Tribune Co., smothered by $13 billion US in debt and weak prospects for generating cash through advertising, yesterday became the first major newspaper publisher to seek bankruptcy protection since the Internet began siphoning readers from traditional outlets.

Background

- Most of Tribune's debt comes from the transaction in which the company was taken private, with employee ownership, by real estate mogul Sam Zell last year.

Although Tribune's next major principal payment on the debt, of $593 million, isn't due until June, Tribune has been in danger of missing lender-imposed financial targets at year's end. Those targets are based on the level of Tribune's debt relative to its cash flow, and become harder to meet as revenue declines, even if the debt itself doesn't increase.

Other newspaper companies have also struggled with their debts, but many have successfully negotiated with lenders to ease their targets in exchange for higher interest rates.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

California **Fighter jet crashes into neighbourhood**

MATT ROSE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The wreckage of an F/A-18D Hornet, seen in background left, is strewn across a San Diego middle-class residential neighbourhood of half-million-dollar homes yesterday after the U.S. fighter jet crashed while preparing to land at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, well known for its role in the movie Top Gun. The pilot ejected safely but three people were killed on the ground, one is missing, two houses were destroyed — one seen on fire, above — and one other damaged.

9/11 suspects looking to plead guilty

GUANTANAMO Five men charged with plotting the Sept. 11. 2001 attacks have told a U.S. military judge that they want to immediately confess at their war-crimes tribunal.

The confessions seem likely to result in guilty pleas at the trial at the U.S. military prison camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

All five face possible execution if convicted.

They say they decided to abandon all efforts to defend themselves on Nov. 4, the day Barack Obama was elected to the White House.

Observers say it's as if they want to rush toward convictions before Obama takes office.

The president-elect has vowed to end the war-crimes trials and close the Guantanamo prison camp.

In a letter the judge read aloud in court, it's implied that the five defendants want to plead guilty, but it does not specify whether they will admit to any specific charges.

The judge, army Col. Stephen Henley, said competency hearings were pending for two of the detainees, precluding them from immediately filing pleas.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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12 world

Blackwater security guards surrender
Five Blackwater security guards have surrendered on 14 counts of manslaughter in connection with a 2007 Baghdad shooting. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Simpson moved to Nevada

O.J. Simpson was transferred yesterday from a Las Vegas jail to a Nevada state prison to begin serving nine to 33 years for his felony convictions in a gunpoint confrontation with two sports memorabilia dealers, a state corrections official said.

Simpson, 61, arrived at High Desert State Prison in Indian Springs, Department of Corrections spokeswoman Suzanne Pardee said.

The all-male medium security prison, about 70 kilometres northwest of Las Vegas, has 3,000 beds and serves as the intake centre for all of the new southern Nevada prison inmates.

O.J.'s defence

- Simpson insisted he only wanted to retrieve items that he said had been stolen from him in the years after he was acquitted of murder in the 1994 slayings of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman in Los Angeles.

Simpson trial co-defendant Clarence (C.J.) Stewart remained yesterday at the Clark County Detention Center, jail records showed.

A Clark County District Court jury found the two men guilty Oct. 3 of 12 charges, including kidnapping, armed robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, burglary and conspiracy in the Sept. 13, 2007, confrontation.

The judge dismissed two felony coercion charges at sentencing.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Court grants bail to ill ex-Yukos lawyer

RUSSIA A jailed former executive of dismantled oil giant Yukos who suffers from AIDS and tuberculosis and has almost completely lost his eyesight was ordered freed on bail yesterday, a court official said.

The Moscow City Court set bail for Vasily Aleksanian, who faces embezzlement and money-laundering charges, at 50 million rubles ($1.8 million), spokeswoman Anna Uschayova said.

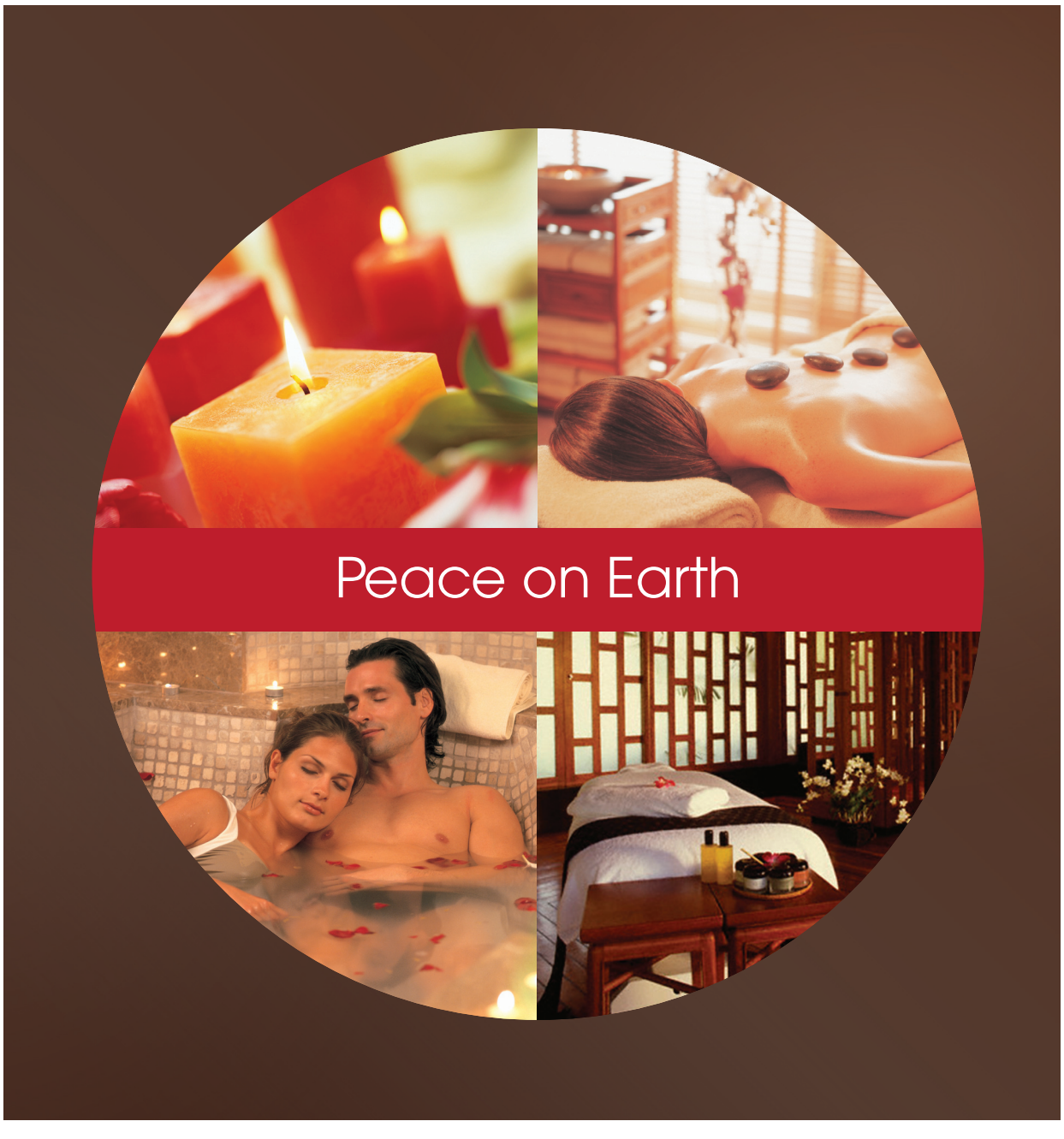
Background

- Once Russia's largest oil producer, Yukos was broken up and sold off in what was seen as the Kremlin's punishment for founder Mikhail Khodorkovsky's political ambitions.

Aleksanian, a 36-year-old U.S.-trained lawyer who's been jailed since 2006, was moved to a clinic in February, while lawyers demanded that he be released from custody given his state of health.

His trial was suspended earlier this year due to major health problems.

The court's ruling represented a rare victory for defendants in cases against Yukos and its jailed founder, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who is serving an eight-year sentence on fraud and tax-evasion charges. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Nobleman vs. Doberman

Less fodder for Tory attacks with Iggy at Liberal helm

NationalReport

Lawrence Martin

So much for the Liberal leadership race. For all intents and purposes it's over. The nightmare before Christmas — the political pandemonium of the last two weeks — has touched off a rush to anoint Michael Ignatieff as the new man.

Anointed he likely will be. The third candidate, Dominic LeBlanc, has exited the race and is throwing his support behind Iggy. A bandwagon effect is in course. The date of the convention, if there is one, will be moved to January, meaning that Bob Rae, who needed time to stage a fight, won't have it. Without it, he is finished. His fundamental problem was that his baggage from his days as Ontario premier, 16 years ago, would not go away. Sometimes we forgive. Sometimes we don't. In his case we didn't.

The installation of Mr. Ignatieff means that the luck of the Conservatives, who have feasted on Dion tenderloin for two years, is likely over.

Sir Michael has his own encumbrances. He is patrician, to the manor born, lacking in the common touch. He is inexperienced, having only been in politics for three years and he signed on, reluctantly, to the coalition deal. On the plus side, he is intellectually radiant and an effective communicator with a presence that is commanding. He knows that the most important thing in politics is messaging. Stephen Harper illustrated this last week when, in the space of a couple of days, he brilliantly changed the national discussion from his pathetic economic statement to national unity.

"The installation of Mr. Ignatieff means that the luck of the Conservatives, who have feasted on Dion tenderloin for two years, is likely over."

The Conservatives will berate Mr. Ignatieff as an egghead and beat him up for signing the coalition pact. But his being new to politics means the fire-breathing Harper will have less ammunition on which to base cheap attack ads. While Bob Rae has many of the Iggy qualities and is much more seasoned, the Harper team would have unlimited gunpowder with him as Liberal leader.

Mr. Ignatieff is also situated more in the centre of the political spectrum and will end, for better or for worse, the leftward drift of the party. He will be in a strong position to rebuild the party in Quebec now that the prime minister has alienated so many in La Belle Province with his demonization of the Bloc Québécois.

With his impressive standing in the polls, Mr. Harper is probably tempted himself to push for an election. The public, caught up in politics to a degree seldom seen, might not be opposed to going to the polls again.

But with Mr. Dion stepping down, the chemistry changes. A new Liberal leader cannot probably help but move his party's numbers upward.

Mr. Ignatieff will move cautiously, easing off on any coalition commitment. A mighty chess match will ensue between him, a nobleman, and the prime minister, a Doberman.

Lawrence Martin is a Globe and Mail correspondent and author who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

How the coalition helped propel Harper in polls

Ezra Levant

The proposed Liberal-NDP-Bloc coalition government is as good as dead — gone as quickly as it was formed.

Just days after it was announced, Liberal MPs started distancing themselves from it. Then Stéphane Dion — the coalition's proposed prime minister — bungled a videotaped speech made for national TV. And then the Governor General granted Stephen Harper a breather by cancelling Parliament for a month.

But the real nails in the coffin are polls showing that Canadians deeply oppose the coalition. The scheme has backfired, and Harper has skyrocketed to his highest ever level of support. How could the opposition have miscalculated so badly?

Three reasons. Personal animosity towards Harper blinded the opposition. During the election, the opposition ran ads that were intensely personal, implying that Harper wasn't really Canadian. The election debate was even harsher. The other leaders, sitting just feet away from him, looked him in the eye and called him a liar and incompetent.

That's their first mistake: the opposition thought that Canadians shared their hate for Harper — so much so that they'd accept any trick to kick him out of office, including a deal with the Bloc Québécois.

The second mistake was that the opposition listened to the media. Reporters tend to be liberal. But the Parliamentary Press Gallery has had a running feud with Harper — even going on "strike" for a while, when they didn't like how Harper chose which reporters' questions to answer. The media's first reaction to the coalition was excitement and support. But that elite opinion was formed in part by their own hostility to Harper.

But the biggest reason why the opposition got this one wrong is the inclusion of the Bloc in the deal. Simply put, Canadians are scared of them, and don't want separatists choosing our prime minister or having a veto over our government. Canadians found it shocking the opposition would do that.

When the Bloc was first formed in 1990, the Liberals and the media were just as appalled as everyone else. But over the past 18 years, as they've rubbed shoulders with Bloc MPs, they've become numb to their dangerous mission. To Ottawa, the Bloc is now normal. But to the rest of Canada, the whole thing is worse than bizarre — it is dangerous.

Signing a contract with Quebec separatists isn't normal in the eyes of Canadians — no matter what Harper-hating opposition MPs or their sympathetic media friends, say.

Ezra Levant is a lawyer, author and free speech activist who blogs at www.ezralevant.com. He volunteered in the Conservative war-room during the last election.

Letters

Boomers and economic bust leave echo jaded

RE: Blame the Boomers (Dec. 3)

I think we've taken a very generalized approach to this generational argument. Being a product of the baby boom generation, it's certainly hard not to be a little jaded. I have witnessed my parents work their lives away, push their stress and relationship levels to incredible limits, and pretend to be content with just five weeks vacation at the age of 50.

With the current economic downturn, and lifetime earnings being flushed down the gutter, its hard to imagine myself following such an unrewarding and predictable path.

PETER REYNOLDS, RICHMOND HILL, ONT

A hunger for politics

I am sure many of us did not know that there was a word called "prorogue" and we all learned something new with this coalition agreement.

While we were discussing the newly discovered word "prorogue," somebody said this word sounds like "pierogi/perogie."

That was that, we got sudden craving for perogies, we decided to prorogue our session and go for perogie break. I thought that was funny.

ANANT NAGPUR, OTTAWA

Proroguing shouldn't give Parliament paid vacation

While I support the prorogation of the Conservative-lead government, I would like to see changes to the law governing the functioning of Parliament so that all members of the legislature will not collect pay while their functions are suspended.

It is incredible that the MPs will be having a paid extended vacation after not even two months of being elected and only days after returning to work.

This kind of special treatment, compared to the one that the average worker gets, is in itself an incentive for parties to behave irresponsibly and play this type of games.

BILL FLORES, OAKVILLE, ONT

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: torontoletters@metronews.ca
Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Canadian forestry firms lost more than a half billion dollars
Canadian forestry companies had losses totalling $552 million in the third quarter due to weak demand for building products as the U.S. housing market continued to deteriorate, says a PricewaterhouseCooper report released yesterday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Stocks surge over Obama package

MARKETS The Toronto stock market and other exchanges around the world generated solid gains yesterday as hopes for the U.S. economy revived after president-elect Barack Obama unveiled the largest American public works plan since the 1950s.

Toronto's S&P/TSX composite index surged 423.04 points or 5.2 per cent to 8,540.07, clawing back some of last week's 12 per cent slide. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Construction activity slows

A cooling real estate market is making Canadian homes more affordable, says RBC senior economist Robert Hogue in a report released yesterday.

Housing starts figures released yesterday support the bank's view. The rate of starts were a much weaker than expected 172,000 units in November, down 19 per cent from the 211,800 units in October, and the slowest pace of residential construction activity since 2001.

The Toronto market took the biggest hit, with starts down 30 per cent, thanks to the volatile condominium building sector.

"With sales falling, credit conditions tight, and fading support from condos, a correction is now upon us," said BMO Capital Markets economist Robert Kavic.

In the third quarter, it took 53.3 per cent of pre-tax income to afford a $436,400 bungalow in Toronto, compared to 54.3 per cent in the second quarter. Most financial institutions use 32 per cent of pre-tax income as a guide in determining whether someone can afford to buy a home. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Unaffordable Vancouver

•Toronto's housing affordability looks a lot better when compared to Vancouver, where it takes 74.8 per cent of pre-tax income to afford a bungalow — making it the most unaffordable city in Canada — down from 78.8 per cent in the second quarter.

Wal-Mart to sell cheaper iPhone?

STRATEGY Media reports, citing Wal-Mart employees in the United States, say the retail giant may sell a version of the iPhone just after Christmas.

It's all about winning over as many consumers as possible, analysts said yesterday.

Wal-Mart would be the second independent retail chain after Best Buy to sell the iPhone, also sold at Apple, AT&T and Rogers Wireless stores.

It's expected a four-gigabyte iPhone would sell for $99 US at U.S. Wal-Marts. The iPhone normally sells for $199 for an 8GB model and $299 for 16GB.

There was no word from Wal-Mart Canada on whether it would sell this new iPhone. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bank set to cut interest rates again

KEY RATE The Bank of Canada is widely expected to slash its key interest rate by another half-point tomorrow to 1.75 per cent, taking the trendsetting rate to the lowest level since 1960. But private-sector economists say that won't be the end of it.

With the risk of a deep recession worsening, central banks around the world, including Canada, are wondering how low they need to go to put enough stimulus into the system to start turning economies around.

Scotia Capital's Derek Holt says no one would be surprised to see Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney chop short-term rates by three-quarters of a point, and then keep going until the bank's target for the overnight rate is at one per cent by spring. THE CANADIAN PRESS

In brief

BOOKS Penguin Group (USA) has started Penguin 2.0, which allows customers to add personal dedication pages to digital books, and enables readers to receive text on iPhones. Meanwhile, the Random House Publishing Group said it would make some books available for free on the iPhone. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Your Money

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

Big gifts with small prices

SmartCookies

With gift giving in full swing we thought we'd share our favourite gift ideas for the fabulous people on your list this year.

Sandra's Pick

Give the gift of experience and the opportunity to save big by giving the 2009 Entertainment book. For less than $50, the book is a collection of vouchers redeemable at both local & national businesses. Savings are available for a variety of sectors, including movies, restaurants, sporting events, travel, gasoline, and more!

For an added touch of thoughtfulness, flip through the book before wrapping and tag a few places you know the gift recipient would love to go. Check out entertainment.com to learn more.

Angela's Pick

For the fashionable and simply fabulous friend on your list, check out Cheeky Umbrella (cheekyumbrella.com). Not only is each umbrella stylish and sturdy but each comes with a sassy statement scrolled along the underside ("When does it start raining men?" and "It's raining, it's pouring, other umbrellas are boring"). This gift is the perfect accessory to the rainy day wardrobe and sure to brighten even the darkest of days. Check it out at cheekyumbrella.com.

Katie's Pick

What better way to give a gift of all the memories you have shared than a photo album. Now you can digitally create your own photo book complete with a hard cover and sleeve. Apple and Snapfish.com offer fabulous products that allow you to drag and drop your photos into a work of art. An album can be completed within minutes and shipping can take as little as five business days. Photo books generally start around $20 depending on the format and number of pages you include.

Andrea's Pick

Nothing is more thoughtful (and as easy on your wallet) than something homemade. So this holiday season, why not grab some girlfriends and spend an evening drinking wine and baking up your own specialty dessert? Take 4-5 pieces of your homemade deliciousness, wrap it with some clear or coloured cellophane paper ($1 at your local dollar store), tie it off with some ribbon and voila — you have a gift for only $3 per bag. For Andrea's favourite fudge recipe, try googling "food network" and "old time chocolate fudge".

Robyn's Pick

Of course you could check out smartcookies.com for ideas (we wouldn't be Smart Cookies if we didn't mention it). For just $5 a month, or $50 a year, you can get a premium subscription for your friend, your daughter, your wife or another other. Members will be able to download resources, create a spending plan, receive e-mail reminders regarding their financial and life goals, along with a free credit report, notices of special Smart Cookie offers and much much more.

If you have questions or suggestions for the Smart Cookies e-mail us at smartcookies@metronews.ca.

Tune in Wednesday night at 9 p.m. EST/PST on the W Network and be sure to visit smartcookies.com for more tips.

Investing

Allan Small

The week's column looks at job losses and the restructuring of companies. Visit metronews.ca

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Plant those tax seeds now

MoneyMatters

Henry Choo Chong

choochonghcga@yahoo.ca

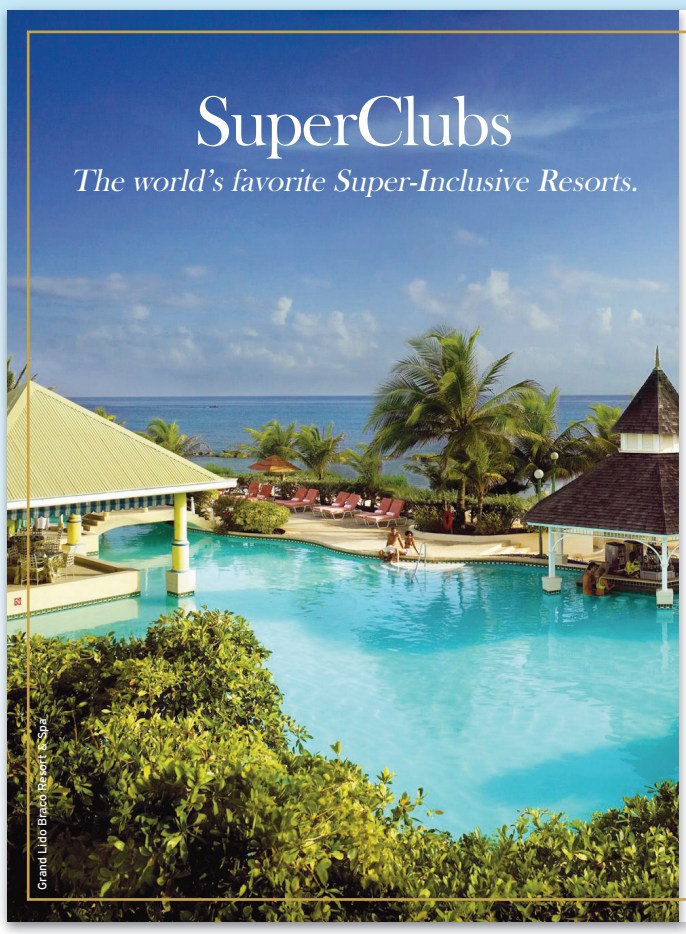
Q I am self-employed and have always run a successful business. Can you offer any tax advice before the end of this dismal year?
Paul

A As the holidays get closer, most Canadians are gearing up for shopping, vacations and festivities — not tax planning. However, a little time spent now may translate to substantial savings in the New Year.

- Consider paying families members that work in the business. They may be taxed at a lower marginal tax rate.
- Purchase assets for use in business before fiscal year-end. Although, you cannot deduct entire amount, CCA is available.
- Keep a close watch on your credit. Banks are reducing and, in some instances, retiring loans.
- Sell stocks with losses that you can apply to reduce realized capital gains in the current year or past three years. Check with your broker.
- Pay yourself first. RRSP contributions not made by Dec. 31, 2008 can be made on or before March 2, 2009 for deduction in 2008
- Donate to a charitable organization before Dec. 31. If you donate stocks that have appreciated in the past several years you may pay zero tax on capital gains and get a donation credit for contributions.

Henry Choo Chong, CGA, provides professional accounting and taxation solutions: choochonghcga@yahoo.ca.

AIR CANADA VACATIONS



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Avery's future with Stars in doubt

Sean Avery's fate with the Dallas Stars could be decided by tomorrow. The team's brass will meet tomorrow afternoon to discuss the Avery situation in depth. Avery is currently serving a six-game suspension for making a crude remark last week. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Klassen won't race this season

Canadian speedskater Cindy Klassen, left, put the brakes on her return from knee surgery and has decided not to race this season. The winner of six Olympic medals wants time for her knees to heal before she steps to the start line again. The 29-year-old Winnipeg native hasn't put her skates back on since arthroscopic surgery in July. Klassen says her priority remains the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver. METRO NEWS SERVICES

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Leafs snap three-game skid

NHL RESULT

Maple Leafs 4 Islanders 2

VS

THE SKINNY: Jason Blake scored the go-ahead goal late in the second period and set up two others, including Jeremy Williams' insurance marker in the third, as the Toronto Maple Leafs ended a three-game losing streak with a 4-2 victory last night over the New York Islanders.

OUT OF THE DOGHOUSE: Blake now has six points in his last three games.

GETTING TIRED? Islanders goalie Joey MacDonald started his 17th straight game in net, but still played well, stopping 33 shots in defeat.

THE CALLUP: Williams, called up from the Marlies on Sunday, also collected an assist and helped form a solid unit with Blake and Dominic Moore.

THE NEXT GAME: Friday night, down the QEW in Buffalo. THE CANADIAN PRESS WITH FILES FROM METRO NEWS SERVICES

THE CANADIAN PRESS/CHRIS YOUNG

The Islanders' Nate Thompson grapples with the Leafs' Ryan Hollweg last night. Toronto won 4-2.

Toews says so long to sophomore slump

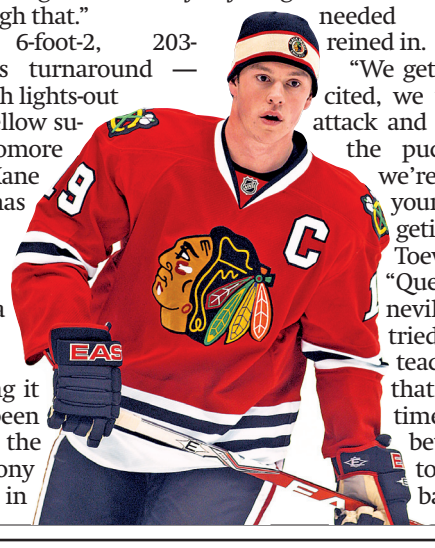
MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

Jonathan Toews had heard of sophomore slumps, but the Chicago Blackhawks forward didn't believe in them.

So when he started the year with no goals and just seven assists in his first 12 games, he didn't fret, even though he carried the weight of a franchise on his shoulders after being named one of the youngest captains in NHL history in July.

Instead, the Winnipeg native righted the ship. After scoring his first goal on Nov. 9, Toews has been flying high, with eight goals and seven assists in his past 13 games. He was named the NHL's second star of the week yesterday. "I think (after your rookie year), reality sets in where you're not in dreamland anymore," Toews said. "You've got to earn every point and every chance offensively, and every little thing that you do, you've got to work harder for it. It's great to finally get through that."

The 6-foot-2, 203-pounder's turnaround — along with lights-out play of fellow super-sophomore Patrick Kane — has Chicago suddenly looking like a playoff team, something it hasn't been since the days of Tony Amonte in 2002.



The Blackhawks actually struggled out of the gate, going 1-2-2, but fired head coach Denis Savard on Oct. 16 and replaced him with Joel Quenneville. That signalled a turnaround for a young, skilled team that needed to be reined in.

"We get overexcited, we want to attack and go after the puck, and we're a young, energetic team," Toews said. "Quenneville has tried to teach us that sometimes it's better just to sit back, relax and let the other team make mistakes."

Toews is battling a nasty cold this week, something he'll want to kick in the next few weeks. The Blackhawks will play an outdoor game — the Winter Classic — against the Detroit Red Wings on New Year's Day at Wrigley Field.

Toews watched last year's Winter Classic, played between the Pittsburgh Penguins and Buffalo Sabres before an NHL-record crowd of 71,217 at Ralph Wilson Stadium. Wrigley Field is expected to seat 41,000.

"There won't be 70,000 people at our game, but I think the energy's going to be similar," Toews said. "That whole kind of big-show atmosphere is going to be pretty cool to be a part of, and we're all looking forward to that."

Sabres-to-Hamilton talk denied by owners

In Buffalo, they're continually denying. In Hamilton, they're once again hopeful.

The hockey link between these two steel cities — based on the great mystery that is the sale of the Buffalo Sabres — roared to life again yesterday, but for very different reasons.

Sabres owners flatly and consistently denied their club is for sale, and that they have had exploratory talks with BlackBerry founder and billionaire Jim Balsillie about the purchase of the team. Those talks are the subject of an upcoming Western New York hockey magazine story, and have revived the possibility in Hamilton that the city's doors for an NHL franchise are open again after being repeatedly slammed shut in several previous scenarios involving Balsillie.

"I would never discuss selling this team to anyone who would move it."
Sabres minority owner Larry Quinn

"Tom (Golisano) is not shopping the team, and I have approached nobody," said Sabres managing partner Larry Quinn, who is said in the report to have approached Balsillie.

"And I would never discuss selling this team to anyone who would move it ... I don't know how we could be any clearer."

The magazine story claims the Balsillie-Sabres talks are in preliminary stages, and will be brought up at the ongoing NHL board of governors meetings in Florida this week.

Balsillie, according to the report, approached Sabres owner Tom Golisano in 2007 about a deal, but was denied because of the threat of moving the team to Hamilton.

Balsillie

Hamilton's pulse for an NHL franchise — flat-lined by previous flawed scenarios — pumped again yesterday with initial belief that Balsillie, and the tortured stock markets that have no doubt affected Golisano, could add legitimacy to a Sabres-to-Hamilton deal.

Balsillie had been in a separate negotiation to purchase the Pittsburgh Penguins, and is reportedly still trying to purchase 27 per cent of the Predators (if the portions of the shares of the now indicted, former Preds owner William Boots Del Baggio, are turned over to the open market).

Balsillie was granted permission by the NHL to enter purchase talks with Nashville in 2007, but he initiated a season ticket drive in Hamilton while the talks were ongoing, drawing the ire of the NHL and ultimately scuttling the talks. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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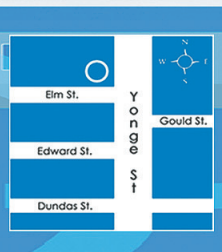

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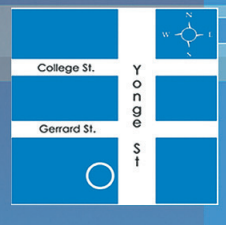

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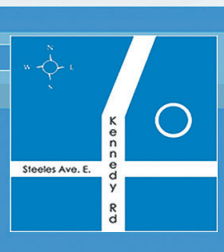

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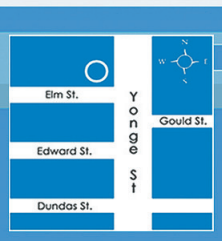

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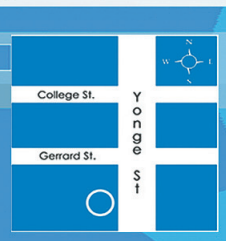

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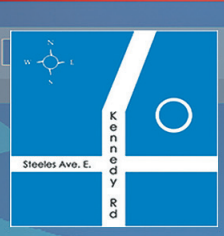

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Another NBA coach fired, McHale steps in

Randy Wittman was fired as head coach of the Minnesota Timberwolves yesterday, becoming the fourth NBA bench boss to be let go this season. Team vice-president and Boston Celtics legend Kevin McHale will take over. METRO NEWS SERVICES

To a fan, Bills looked out of place in Toronto

John Chick
john.chick@metronews.ca

I've been a Buffalo Bills fan since childhood. In 1991, I was nervously chewing on a towel when I watched Scott Norwood miss a Super Bowl-winning field goal wide right from 47 yards.

The following year my anger following their 37-24 Super Bowl loss to Washington — along with youthful idiocy — led me to lash out at society by shoplifting a can of Alpha Getti from a Niagara-area convenience store.

I've stuck with this team through all the bad things that can only happen to the Bills, from the Music City Miracle to Rian Lindell's 47 wide right against Cleveland four weeks ago.

Skepticism aside, I was somewhat excited Sunday when the realization hit that the Bills would be playing a "home" game 400 feet away from where I live.

In the morning, I even went outside in minus-10 wind chills to check out the "tailgate party" the corporate superstructure had set up a few blocks away.

When I arrived, I was told by security personnel that unless I was "with somebody," I had to enter through the general admission gate on the other side.

Sure, I wasn't being totally excluded, but at that moment it was clear to me that the Bills don't belong in Toronto.

You don't see bouncers guarding fans' barbecues outside Ralph Wilson Stadium in Buffalo, and you're actually allowed to tailgate there — rather than forced to pay $8 for beer.

This was a parking lot gathering in sub-zero conditions, not Ultra or Cheval. If I wanted VIP access, I'd roll with Plaxico Burress.

Of course, none of this matters when you're trying to make money and legitimize your $78-million investment.

But the chasm between sports culture in Buffalo and Toronto is so great that Sunday's event stuck out to me like a sore thumb.

Western New York is hardscrabble and blue collar; the people there don't need to be told the economy is really bad, because it's been really bad there for 30 years.

Yet their football team — and to a smaller degree their hockey team — continues to be their main source of civic pride.

You can gloss over many other teams in sports with more club seats and fair-weather fans willing to pay $350 to be seen in the latest "it" spot and make it look sort of legitimate.

But with the Bills, it just doesn't fit.

While Toronto's recent sports history is far from successful, Buffalo's is downright tragic.

All the on-field failures and near misses aside, last Friday the pathetic saga of perhaps their greatest player, O.J. Simpson, seemingly came to an end. In June, their most visible booster — broadcaster Tim Russert — died suddenly.

It's pain that can't be transplanted, or pimped out with slick advertising and heated VIP tents.

The tapestry of being a Bills fan belongs in Buffalo and nowhere else.

Not to suggest there should be any sort of switcheroo here with yesterday's Sabres-for-sale rumours — in my opinion, the last thing southern Ontario *needs* is more professional ice hockey — but the city of Buffalo could survive without an NHL team. I'm not sure they can survive without the Bills, and current Sabres owner Tom Golisano is probably the only person in Western New York with pockets deep enough to keep the NFL franchise there.

Regardless, I'm fairly certain the NFL isn't coming to Toronto full time, but the Bills in Toronto series is here for a while — money talks, and the Bills need money.

Whether or not they move to Los Angeles one day is another story altogether.

For now, at best, it just means for one Sunday a year they will play here — corporately staged, out of place, out of their element, and not fully appreciated.

John Chick is Metro's Sports Editor. He can be reached at john.chick@metronews.ca

Just for fun

- To get an appreciation of what being a Bills fan is like, and to get a sense of what the team means to the fans of the city of Buffalo, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oZe9mzFxF4

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Dolphins loving quick turnaround

A year ago, the Miami Dolphins were 0-13 and headed for a 1-15 season. Twelve months later, they are in position to win the AFC East by winning their remaining three games, one of the more remarkable turnarounds ever.

GETTY IMAGES

New coach Tony Sparano and new QB Chad Pennington are big reasons for Miami's success.

Even after Bill Parcells took over team operations and brought in Tony Sparano to coach the team, no one expected an 8-5 record this late in the schedule and a three-way tie with the Patriots and Jets.

There are extenuating circumstances.

One is the season-ending injury to Tom Brady in the first quarter of the season's first game, bringing New England back to the pack in both the division and in the AFC. Another is the trade that brought Brett Favre to the Jets, resulting in the release of Chad Pennington and his signing by the Dolphins, giving Miami the quarterback it lacked last season.

"The story does keep getting better," safety Yeremiah Bell said after Miami pulled into a first place tie by beating Buffalo 16-3 in Toronto on Sunday, while the Jets were losing their second straight in San Francisco.

Sunday's game was just another example of how things have gone so right for Miami this season. Instead of playing in 1 degree temperatures in Buffalo, the Dolphins were indoors in the Rogers Centre, where it was 20 C, just the right atmosphere for a team from South Florida. And a good part of the crowd was on their side.

"It wasn't clear who the home team was, but that's nice for us," noted Ricky Williams.

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2008 HOLIDAY PROGRAM GUIDE

CBC

December

Sunday 7
8 pm — Elf

Tuesday 9
8 pm — The Legend of Frosty

Wednesday 10
8 pm — The Santa Clause 1

Thursday 11
7 pm ET — Hockey Night In Canada
Tampa Bay at Montreal

Friday 12
8 pm — Santa Claus Is Comin' To Town

Sunday 14
5:30 pm — Disney's Eloise at Christmastime
7 pm — Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer
8 pm — The Polar Express

Monday 15
8 pm — Dr. Seuss: How the Grinch Stole Christmas
8:30 pm — Frosty The Snowman

Tuesday 16
8 pm — The Santa Clause 2

Wednesday 17
8 pm — Merry Christmas, Mr. Bean
8:30 pm — Frosty Returns
9 pm — Holiday Festival on Ice 2008

Thursday 18
7 pm ET — Hockey Night In Canada
Philadelphia at Montreal

Friday 19
8 pm — Secret of the Nutcracker
9:30 pm — Little Mosque on the Prairie Holiday Special

Sunday 21
5:30 pm — Disney's I'll Be Home For Christmas
7 pm — Disney's Mickey's Christmas Carol
7:30 pm — Dr. Seuss: How the Grinch Stole Christmas
8 pm — National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation
11 pm — John McDermott Sharing Christmas

Schedule subject to change. Check local listings.

Monday 22

8 pm — Disney's Winnie the Pooh & Christmas, Too
8:30 pm — Stewart McLean's Vinyl Café Christmas Pageant
1 am — Miracle on 34th Street (1947)

Tuesday 23

8 pm — Miracle on 34th Street (1994)
1 am — A Christmas Story

Wednesday 24

7 pm — It's A Wonderful Life
1 am — Scrooge

Thursday 25 Christmas Day

10 am — Walt Disney World Christmas Day Parade Featuring Steven & Chris
12 noon — Queen's Message
12:10 pm — Blizzard
2 pm — Jack Frost
4 pm — Olive The Other Reindeer
6 pm — My Song Is My Gift: A George Canyon Christmas
8 pm — Booky and the Secret Santa
1 am — White Christmas

Friday 26

8 pm — Celine
1 am — The Bells Of St. Mary's

Sunday 28

5 pm — Curious George
7 pm — March of the Penguins
9 pm — Holiday Festival on Ice 2008

Monday 29

8 pm — Cirque du Soleil: Kooza

Tuesday 30

8 pm — Finding Nemo

Wednesday 31 New Year's Eve

7 pm — Best of Just For Laughs
8 pm — Air Farce: New Year's Eve Special
9 pm — Ron James: Manitoba Bound
11 pm — The Hour: New Year's Eve Special
12:01 am — Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me

Thursday Jan 1

1 pm ET — 2009 NHL Winter Classic: Detroit at Chicago

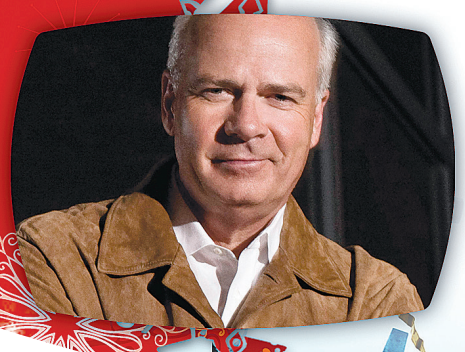
Favourite holiday specials

Amber Marshall: "A fond memory for me was being all snug and cozy by the fire, watching **Rudolph**."

Steven Sabados: "**How The Grinch Stole Christmas** is my all-time favourite. Even my Great Dane is named after the Grinch's dog - except my Max has never worn antlers."

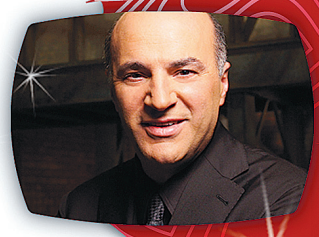
Chris Hyndman is man enough to admit that he loves getting into the holiday spirit with **The Polar Express**. "It makes me cry like a baby every time!"

Rick Mercer will enjoy watching **Ron James: Manitoba Bound** because "Ron is the funniest man in Canada."



Peter Mansbridge will ring in the New Year with **Air Farce's** special finale. "It's the team's final flight and it'll be a great celebration of laughs from the past."

George Stroumboulopoulos: "I like to spend the Christmas season with two families – my own, and the Griswold's.



Dragon **Kevin O'Leary** finds a personal connection in the holiday comedy **Scrooged**: "Most people think Scrooge is cheap. To me, he's just a smart and strategic business man."

Natalie Brown can quote almost every line like, "You'll shoot your eye out!" from her favourite holiday classic **A Christmas Story** – which was filmed in her second hometown of St. Catharines.

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Leap Frog

Azinger won't captain American Ryder Cup team

Paul Azinger will not return as U.S. captain in the Ryder Cup after leading the Americans to their only victory this decade. The PGA of America will announce the new captain on Thursday, with all indications that it will be Corey Pavin. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Maddux retires with 355 wins

MLB Four-time Cy Young award winner Greg Maddux announced his retirement yesterday, after 355 wins and 23 major-league seasons. "I really just came out here today to say thank you," he said at a Las Vegas press conference. "I appreciate everything this game has given me. It's going to be hard to walk away, obviously, but it's time. I have a family now that I need to spend some more time with."

Maddux

Next stop, the Hall of Fame. Maddux leaves with four consecutive NL Cy Young Awards (1992-95) and a 3.16 ERA, especially impressive in the steroid era. He ranks eighth on the career wins list, with one more victory than Roger Clemens.

"I never changed," said Maddux, who turns 43 in April. "I think, hey, you locate your fastball and you change speeds no matter who is hitting."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sports in brief

NFL Kicker Morten Andersen, the NFL's all-time leading scorer, is retiring because of knee problems. The 48-year-old Dane, who scored 2,544 points during his 25-year career, played for the Atlanta Falcons the last two seasons but wasn't able to get a contract this year. Andersen said yesterday he has given up his search and his NFL career. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SCOREBOARD

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

TORONTO 4 N.Y. Islanders 2
Boston 5 Tampa Bay 3
Florida 4 Ottawa 3 (OT)
Buffalo 4 Pittsburgh 3
Nashville at St. Louis

TONIGHT'S GAMES

N.Y. Islanders at Philadelphia
Calgary at Montreal
Vancouver at Nashville
Los Angeles at Colorado
(rescheduled from Dec. 10)

NBA

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Miami 100 Charlotte 96
Houston 109 Memphis 97
Golden State 112 Oklahoma City 102
Orlando at L.A. Clippers

TONIGHT'S GAMES

TORONTO at Cleveland
Detroit at Washington
Utah at Minnesota
New York at Chicago
Atlanta at Houston
San Antonio at Dallas
Milwaukee at Phoenix
Orlando at Portland
L.A. Lakers at Sacramento

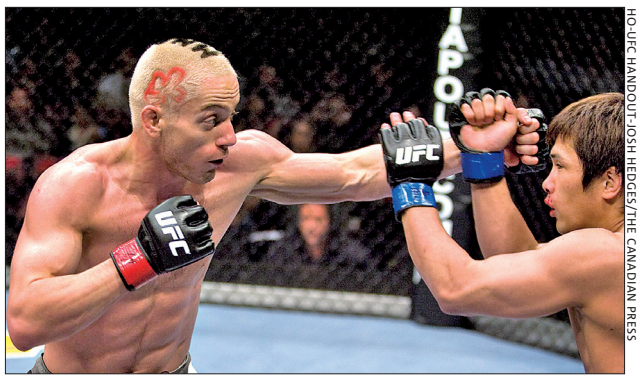
YorkReport

Marty York

WILL RETURN

Goulet ready to rumble after haircut

Fighters say it's all in the preparation. Which may explain why Canadian welterweight Jonathan (The Road Warrior) Goulet is willing to spend three hours getting his hair just right for a 15-minute fight with Mike (Quick) Swick.



HO-UFC HANDOUT-JOSH HEDGES/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian welterweight Jonathan (The Road Warrior) Goulet, left, shows off his traditionally colourful fight-day hair in an April win over Kuniyoshi Hironaka at UFC 83 in Montreal.

One of Goulet's trademarks is his colourful hair, usually a combination of shaved, dyed swirls that serve as a billboard for his sponsors. His new 'do is emblazoned with MMAfightshop.ca and Tapout.

That's a lot to fit on one head. "Yes," Goulet says with a chuckle. "But it's well done." At least he has sponsors to show off. For his fight against Josh Koscheck in August 2006 — a submission loss — he had the words "For Rent" on his head.

Tomorrow night, the 29-year-old Goulet will unveil his latest fashion statement in Fayetteville, N.C., when he steps into the cage against Swick in the UFC's "Fight for the Troops" show (9 p.m. ET, Rogers Sportsnet).

The mixed martial arts fight card was organized to raise funds for a hospital for traumatic brain injuries for the U.S. military.

And Goulet, as a foreigner fighting an American, will likely be in for some boos from a crowd featuring thousands of soldiers from nearby Fort Bragg.

He can expect a raucous crowd if the December 2006 show from the Marine Corps Air Station outside San Diego is anything to go by.

"The Americans are very patriotic," Goulet said. "So I won't be the favourite guy down there. But after the fight, it will change, for sure."

Goulet, a native of Victoriaville, Que., who now calls Montreal home, is expecting his opponent to be in good shape, noting this represents Swick's third fight at 170 pounds since moving down from middleweight. "He's getting used to the weight," said Goulet.

Swick (12-2), a Texan who now is based out of San Jose where he trains at the American Kickboxing Academy, looked sluggish in his debut at welterweight — a decision over Josh Burkman — but appeared sharper in a decision over Marcus Davis, who was hampered by a shoulder injury.

The last time we saw Goulet, the crowd was in his corner and the Quebec welterweight was celebrating an impressive comeback over Kuniyoshi Hironaka at UFC 83 on April 19 at Montreal's Bell Centre.

"It was a special night," said Goulet. "I not only won that fight, I won the fight of the night (bonus)," he added, referring to the $75,000 cheque he and Hironaka each received.

It was the first fight on the UFC's first ever Canadian card and Goulet helped stir up a loud and proud crowd.

First he walked in wearing a Canadiens jersey. Then he survived some heavy punishment late in the rough first round to stop Hironaka at 2:07 of the second.

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TRU set to construct House of Learning
Kamloops-based Thompson Rivers University held a groundbreaking ceremony for its $32-million House of Learning. The facility will feature a new library, learning commons, and space for Aboriginal programs and services. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Workology

Gender neutral

The University of Western Ontario will join a number of Canadian universities, such as UBC and Simon Fraser University, in opening 10 gender-neutral washrooms on campus. The washrooms are designed for transgendered students.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Get raw with Rawlicious eats

Small Business

NOELLE MUNARETTO
for Metro Canada

At Rawlicious, certain patrons feel so comfortable they take off their shoes at the front door. Sometimes they even accidentally lock the door behind them.

Angus Crawford and Tracy Mulvihill, who are partners in both life and business, always knew their raw food café felt like home. After all, they have lived behind and above the restaurant for two years.

The pair was shocked, however, when diners came to view the building as home too. As traffic increased, Crawford and Mulvihill needed to renovate further into the restaurant. They had to create a second dining area by pushing back their bedroom into the last room.

"I would be in my underwear and people would be tromping through my bedroom with tools," said Mulvihill of the expansion experience.

Rawlicious is the first restaurant venture for Crawford and Mulvihill, who had previous careers in advertising and child protection services respectively.

After Mulvihill was diagnosed with breast cancer five years ago, she and Crawford began researching alternative ways to help battle the disease. When they stumbled upon raw food, the two were instantly converted.

"We started getting raw cookbooks, and looking on the net, and finding out recipes," said Mulvihill.

As Crawford discovered how labour-intensive it was to prepare raw food, he decided that if they were going to continue eating raw, they might as well turn it into a small business.

"The idea was that he was going to work in the kitchen and I was going to sit in a little comfy chair and read my books and have tea, and people were going to come in and have juices and life was going to be peachy," said Mulvihill, laughing.

In what Mulvihill calls a "total leap of faith," they bought a building in Toronto's up-and-coming Junction neighbourhood. Crawford renovated the space himself in two months flat and since the café's opening this April, foodies have flocked to Rawlicious for healthy and organic eats.

Now, Mulvihill and Crawford's bedroom is located above the restaurant. They turned the back room into a "Zen Den" for monthly movie screenings and private parties. Crawford's next project is to convert their backyard into a lush outdoor patio.

Despite their success, both Crawford and Mulvihill admit that running such a niche restaurant is difficult.

"You have to be in this business altruistically in a lot of ways," he said. "There's not a lot of money in it."

Crawford adds that because of the turbulent economy his organic food costs have increased by 20 per cent, leaving little room for spending in other areas like advertising.

When the time is right, they will begin transforming the building's second floor into what Crawford calls, "The Whole You Project." Their goal is to create a wellness centre complete with raw food, spiritual healers, an infrared sauna, and alternatives to traditional medicine.

For now, Mulvihill and Crawford are focused on spending time together, and enjoying the company of their patrons.

"Every once and a while we have to go out the doors and come back in so that we can really appreciate all of this," she said.

NOELLE MUNARETTO/FOR METRO CANADA

When Angus Crawford and Tracy Mulvihill discovered how labour-intensive it was to prepare raw food, they decided that they might as well turn it into a small business.

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Mount Allison rocks vegetarian world

Offering its students high quality vegan and vegetarian entrees in its cafeteria has earned Mount Allison University top marks from the U.S.-based People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

The university in Sackville, N.B., was nominated in the third annual Most Vegetarian-Friendly Universities in Canada competition held by PETA2, the college-focused arm of the organization.

Mount Allison came out on top, it was announced recently, followed by the University of Victoria, McMaster University in Hamilton, the University of Western Ontario in London, Ont., and the University of Toronto.

Mount Allison was cited for offering students a fully vegan dining station with more than 100 vegan dishes to choose from, and for its green policies.

Food services include trayless dining and a self-service plate-scraping station, which has led to a 40 per cent decrease in the amount of food waste.

Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B., was named the Most Vegetarian-Friendly University in Canada recently.

"In this day and age, sitting down to a healthy, well-balanced meal can be a challenge," says Brian Slemming, director of dining services at the university.

"That is why we put so much focus and effort in ensuring our vegetarian meals offer a healthy alternative as well as appealing to the taste buds of not just vegetarians, but everyone who comes into the dining hall."

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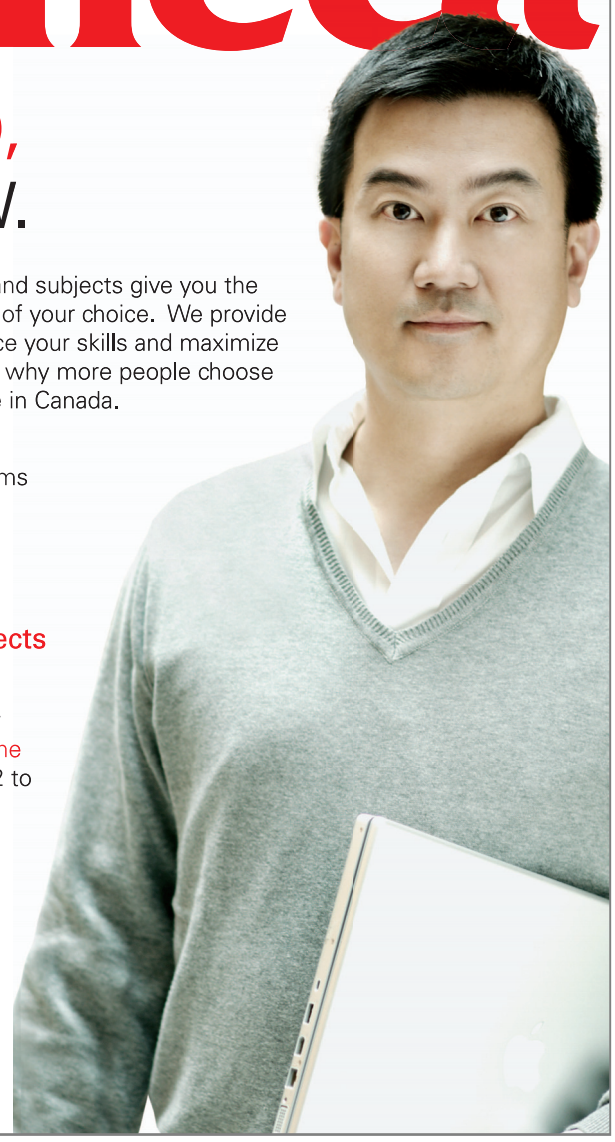

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Fanshawe launches awareness campaign for student code of conduct

Fanshawe College began an awareness campaign for its student code of conduct, which was revised over the summer. The updates to the policy concerns off-campus conduct that affect a member of the Fanshawe community's learning and working environment, as well as health and safety. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Social networking

• Forty-one per cent of workers surveyed have a MySpace, Facebook or other social networking page. More than one-third (35 per cent) of them spend time on their social networking page during the workday with eight per cent spending 30 minutes or more.

Online holiday shopping not uncommon at work

It's the time of year again for eggnog, good cheer and of course, a bit of online holiday shopping in the office.

Nearly one-third (29 per cent) of workers, in line with last year's findings, plan to holiday shop online while at work this year, but it may be best saved for lunch hours or break times; half of employers report they monitor the Internet use of employees. This is according to a new survey from CareerBuilder.com.

As seasonal online shopping ramps up, productivity in the workplace will be impacted. Of those who plan to holiday shop online this season while at work, 43 per cent of workers anticipate they will spend more than one hour, 23 per cent said they will spend two hours or more and 13 per cent will spend three hours or more.

"While employers are unlikely to terminate workers for online holiday shopping ... employees should police their personal Internet usage."
Rosemary Haefner

"While employers are unlikely to terminate workers for online holiday shopping during the workday, employees should police their personal Internet usage," said Rosemary Haefner, vice-president of human resources for CareerBuilder.com. "In addition, employees need to be aware of company Internet policies, as more than a quarter of employers surveyed monitor workers' time spent online and sites visited. Employees can then determine if it is best to designate their lunch hour or break times for online holiday shopping."

INTERNET USAGE AT THE OFFICE

• Research: Sixty-one per cent of workers use the Internet for non-work related research and activities while they are at work.

• E-mail: When it comes to digital correspondence, 20 per cent of workers send six or more non-work related e-mails per day.

• Blogging: Nine per cent of workers surveyed have a personal blog, and while early a quarter (23 per cent) of them spend time blogging at work.

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Health & Beauty

If you're going to be enjoying a diet-busting holiday meal, eating smaller meat portions, salads and baked potatoes with no butter or cream can help keep the pounds off.

Holiday weight gain avoidable

Key is to maintain healthy eating habits and indulge only in moderation: Nutritionist

BRIAN TOWIE
brian.towie@metronews.ca

Caution: You might put on more holiday weight than you plan for.

'Tis the season for indulgence: Christmas parties offer a plethora of candies, snacks and egg nog and that family dinner will more than likely consist of the classic favourites such as juicy turkey, turnip and mashed potatoes swimming in hearty gravy.

The holidays offer all kinds of easy opportunities to put on the "seasonal seven," or possibly the "seasonal-significantly-more-than-seven," but with a little restraint, you can minimize the jiggle that accompanies the jingle.

"A lot of people will have good eating habits going into the holidays and then say, 'Well, I can let it go for now and then get back on the horse after,' but those extra five to seven pounds are hard to face on Jan. 1," says Maine-based registered dietitian and nutrition adviser for the Wild Blueberry Association Susan B. Davis.

"Stick with those good eating habits for as long as you can."

Egg nog — a holiday staple — is a real diet killer, experts say.

Mindless snacking often paves the road to ruin, says Davis. Since you're attending more parties this time of year, you'll be tempted by fattening hors d'oeuvres preceding a dinner.

Moderation is the key: Don't overdo it with appetizers if you've shown up for a calorie-loaded meal. When you do finally get to the main course, stay modest and limit your sauces. Smaller meat portions, salads and baked potatoes with no butter or cream can all control the damage and nourish, as can fruits, steamed vegetables and spinach with no cheese. Eat slowly and only when you're hungry.

"A delicious Christmas dinner can contain as much as 3,500 calories, without drinks."
Susan B. Davis, registered dietician

"The arithmetic on what comes on versus what comes off is astounding," says Davis. "You can eat 1,000-1,500 calories without blinking. A delicious Christmas dinner can contain as much as 3,500 calories, without drinks. That can mean six hours on the elliptical machine just for one meal. It's a bear. You've got to either burn it up or eat less."

For every alcoholic drink, have one non-alcoholic drink, such as water, she advises. And while it's appropriate for the season, lay off the egg nog if you can.

"Out of the drinks you might have, that one in particular is a real diet killer," Davis says of the popular Christmas bevy. "Excess alcohol can contribute to sleep deprivation, which encourages weight gain. It's all connected."

The onus is on you to use the holiday time wisely, says Davis. When you're looking to watch your weight, there's no time like the present.

"The week between Christmas and New Year's is another week of indulgence. You might feel guilty about the leftovers in your fridge and overeat to use them all up," she said. "Give it to a food bank. You don't have to wait until New Year's to clean up your act. Use that week to get back to normal."

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Cyclists can enjoy winter

Growing concern about the environment, fitness and the high cost of fuel have persuaded many to take up winter cycling.

Even in the dead of a Prairie winter, when the thermometer dips below -40 C, the streets are covered by a sheen of crackling ice and breathing brings a frozen sting to the lungs, Lindsay Gauld will get on his bicycle.

The former Olympian, now 60, is one of a growing number of people who cycle even in conditions that would drive most people to hibernate.

"There are no bad days, just bad clothing choices," laughs Gauld as he takes a break in downtown Winnipeg on what he considers a relatively mild day. It only feels like -20 C with the wind chill.

"You've just got to keep your feet warm, your hands warm, your head. I mean, I've got three layers of clothing on. I'd maybe add one more."

Gauld's love for cycling is literally full-time. He retired comfortably a few years ago and now works as a bike courier — for the exercise more than the money. He enjoys battling traffic and the elements as he covers more than 100 kilometres on an average day.

It's not just former athletes like Gauld — who was on Canada's cycling team at the 1972 Munich Olympics — who pedal year-round.

Growing concern about the environment, fitness and the high cost of fuel have persuaded students, office workers and others to abandon cars for two-wheeled transport, even in Canada's coldest cities.

"My family is really prone to obesity, and I was finding when I had a car that I was putting on quite a bit of weight," says Meghan Bodner, a 33-year-old web developer who commutes 20 minutes to work each day.

Bodner gave her car to a relative a few years ago, determined to get in shape and do her part for cleaner air.

Winter cycling can make it harder for motorists and cyclists to get along, as they share streets narrowed by piles of snow, Bodner says.

"Once I had a Pepsi can thrown upside my head. It just takes one or two really rude people to ruin your day."

Winter cyclist Steve Andersdon says he's gotten some sideways look from friends and co-workers.

"People often, when I get to school, think I'm crazy: 'You know, it's -30 C, you must be freezing,'" says Andersen, 28, who rides his bike for about 15 minutes to and from classes at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton.

Andersen says his biggest challenge comes on days when he faces a stiff north wind as he crosses the city's High-Level Bridge, which spans the North Saskatchewan River. A balaclava, extra mitts and a few layers of clothing allow him to get through it. He even works up a sweat, taking off a layer or two as his ride progresses.

"You're not cold the way you are when you stand around waiting for a bus," Andersen says.

Winter cycling is not nearly as hard as most people assume, Andersen says. A sturdy bike, good tires and extra lubrication to protect bicycle parts from the bitter cold will get people through snow and ice.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Activity keeps the weight off

BRIAN TOWIE
brian.towie@metronews.ca

Seasonal activities such as skating can have a positive effect.

Just because the holiday season has arrived doesn't mean you shouldn't get off your butt.

With all the turkey, gravy and egg nog to be consumed this holiday season, chances are good you'll pack on a few extra pounds by the new year if you're not careful. While the idea may not be so inviting given the winter weather, you can exercise a bit of damage control by getting active while you've got the spare time.

"The winter months are more challenging," says Elio Antunes, chief operating officer and vice-president of partnerships at Participaction. "It's dark and cold, so people aren't as encouraged to get active. But physical activity and a healthy lifestyle go hand in hand; the more active you are, the better energy you'll have to enjoy your holidays."

It doesn't exclusively take a strict exercise regimen to get more active. Antunes says you can shape up with everyday activities: Shovelling the driveway, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, and seasonal family activities such as tobogganing and skating can all have an impact.

Physical activity is particularly important for the kids, says Antunes, who adds that Canadian 10- to 16-year-olds spend an average of 42 hours per week in front of the TV. The new video games and toys they'll get for Christmas may not encourage them to get outside.

"Parents have to be more aware of how kids require exercise," he said.

"If you're going to get them a video game for Christmas, try and make it an active one."

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Farewell to flab

Looking to work off the turkey gut? Try this core muscle routine from Sifu Rupert Harvey of Golden Harmony Kung Fu:

Warm up
- Breathe deeply into your lower diaphragm three times. Do quick rotations of the neck, arms and hips.
- Lie on the ground with your legs sticking up at 90 degrees and your hands rested under your pelvis. Move your legs down to six inches off the ground and return them to the original position in a circular fashion. Repeat 20 times, then do it in the opposite direction.
- Stay on the ground and put your legs in the same position as you would if you were pedalling a bike. Do 50 pedals for each leg.
- Put one leg up in the air at 90 degrees and the other six inches off the ground. Switch positions. Repeat 20-25 times.
- Keep legs together, six inches off the ground. Imagine you're climbing a rope hanging over your midsection. Maintain this position, climbing the rope 50 times per hand.
- Raise one leg to 90 degrees, with the other six inches off the ground. Reach for the heel of the raised leg 20 times. Switch and repeat.

Cool down
- Stand up and touch your toes, holding it for 30 seconds. Put your hands on your waist and rotate your hips. Bend back as far as you can, bend forward as far as you can. Repeat several more times. Breathe deeply. – BRIAN TOWIE

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Keep a food journal

A study published in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine found that participants who kept track of the food they ate and the minutes they exercised lost significantly more weight than those who did not. NEWS CANADA

Beat the blues with good mood foods

BRIAN TOWIE
brian.towie@metronews.ca

Fish and eggs can help to kickstart your brain and elevate your mood, says nutritionist and Food Network host Theresa Albert.

It might just be time to rethink the definitions of happy meals and comfort foods.

Sticking to a sensible diet doesn't just keep you healthy, it affects how you feel. Much like caffeine or alcohol, what you put in your body contributes to your mood, says one nutrition expert, and eating well can help you chase away the blues.

"Of course food affects our mood. It can't not do so," says Theresa Albert, nutritionist and host of Food Network show Just One Bite.

"It's about controlling and stabilizing the blood sugar level — when you don't eat for several hours, you're a bear. There's a biological imperative to kill what you eat, which is why you can feel rage when you haven't eaten."

Two foods help stabilize your blood sugar, Albert says. Salba, a nutrient dense and medically patented organic whole seed, can be added to yogurt or oatmeal. Also try hemp seeds, which have a high level of gamma-linolenic acid and can regulate hormonal swings, particularly for women.

Along with control of your blood sugar, you need your fatty acids. Fish is high in Omega 3s and DHAs to kickstart your brain.

"If you can't get enough fish, which you should eat three to five times a week, you get your fish oils," says Albert, adding studies have shown fish oils can positively impact people with attention deficit disorder, anxiety and depression.

"Eggs are important as well," she says. "They've got vitamin B and tryptophan, which the neurotransmitters in your brain need as fuel to work properly, much like a car needs oil."

What your body needs less of, she says, is what we've come to know as comfort food. In the same way a smoker might initially improve their mood after that unhealthy first puff of the day, so will the chicken pot pies, smoked meat sandwiches and breaded mozzarella sticks with marinara sauce put you in better spirits right away. But digesting such a heavy meal only makes you feel worse in the long run.

"The 'comfort' in comfort food is learned comfort," she said. "So, really, it's this connection to who fed it to us to comfort us in the past. Your mother's chicken soup, your grandmother's chocolate cake, whatever that food was, they're looking for comfort. So we're looking for softness, warmth and the biological drive to consume fat — totally useless in our culture when we're not very far from food ever and we're not going to burn off that fat."

Healthy eating

Salba Swiss Muesli

This recipe — which serves two — can be scaled up to accommodate, and it stores well up to four days. Preparation time: 2 minutes.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3/4 cup plain yogurt
- 1 apple — grated
- 1/2 cup frozen blueberries
- 1 tbsp oatmeal — raw
- 1 tbsp slivered almonds
- 1 tbsp Salba — ground or whole
- 1/4 cup Mum's Original Hemp Seed
- 1 tsp blackcurrant jam (optional)

METHOD:

Mix all ingredients together and leave overnight in the fridge. Serve in an ice cream cone (not sugar or waffle!) for on-the-go eating!

– THERESA ALBERT, THYME FOR SUPPER

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Meal planning helps keep you on healthy track

With the blustery winter weather outside, enjoy the warmth of your home with some good ol' savoury and delicious home cooking. By preparing home-cooked meals more regularly, you can save money while eating healthier and in smaller portions.

Below is some advice to keep your dining-in routine and budget on track:

Create a weekly meal schedule. Come home with a game plan for dinner instead of just hungry and confused. Plan ahead before making trips to the grocery store to help eliminate unnecessary purchases.

Mix up your recipes. Try one new recipe each week to expand your repertoire and build your reputation.

Maximize ingredients. Instead of using an ingredient once, consider how you can get the most out of it to save money and time. For example, Florida grapefruit juice is enormously versatile and can be incorporated into sauces, stir-frys, soup or salads, adding that healthy zing to meals.

NEWS CANADA

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Breast tissue re-growth

Self-renewing cells are crucial in clues to cancer prevention

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

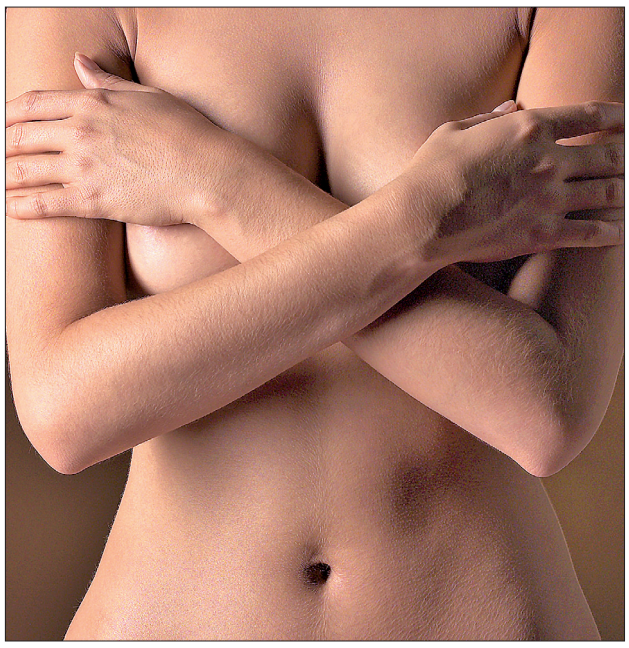
Scientists in Vancouver have been able to regrow a complete mammary gland using breast stem cells.

This is an important development as the world inches closer to stopping breast cancer before it takes hold.

A team from the B.C. Cancer Agency used healthy breast tissue leftover from breast reduction surgery. They isolated the stem cells — the cells that are best at self-renewing. They then inserted these human stem cells into a special type of mouse developed for this purpose. "The cells grow. They make mini human mammary glands," said Dr. Connie Eaves, director of the B.C. Cancer Agency's Terry Fox Laboratory, and a senior author of the team's study.

Previously, scientists had been able to regrow mouse mammary glands from stem cells, but not human ones, so this is an exciting breakthrough, explained Dr. Eaves. The team's paper was published at the end of November in the medical journal Nature Medicine.

Investigators around the world believe that the stem cells are the culprits in breast cancer. Understanding the fundamental mechanisms of stem cells takes scientists one step closer to figuring out how breast cancer starts. "It is important to understand that cell — what makes it grow," said Dr. Eaves. Now researchers can zero in on what goes wrong at the cellular level in cases of breast cancer.


B.C. scientists discovered they could regrow a mammary gland using breast stem cells — the cells that are best at regenerating.

It may take at least a decade to design drugs that target those faulty stem cells, but progress is being made. "Studying the cells will help us understand them and that will lead to better treatments," added Dr. Eaves. Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Canadian women, with more than 22,000 new cases each year.

Said co-author Dr. Samuel Aparicio of the B.C. Cancer Agency: "The long-term aim is to figure out what makes normal breast stem cells tick and then use this information to see what may be high-jacked or distorted when these cells become malignant."

Two years ago, researchers at Harvard speculated that one day it would be possible to inject healthy breast stem cells into women who have undergone breast cancer surgery, with the hope of growing new breasts without the cancer cells.

One of the challenges of the new Vancouver study was to find a way to get human cells to grow in mice without the mice rejecting them. The team used special mice whose immune systems had been turned off, but whose blood supply would nourish the human cells and help them grow. The human stem cells were suspended in a gelatin disc and then the disc was slipped under the capsule that surrounds the kidneys of the mice. Lo and behold: Fed by the blood supply of the mice, the transplanted human stem cells were able to regrow a complete, miniature, milk-producing mammary gland, proving that the normal female breast contains cells that can regenerate.

"Studying the cells will help us understand them and that will lead to better treatments."
Dr. Connie Eaves, director of the B.C. Cancer Agency's Terry Fox Laboratory

Eggs acerbate diabetes risk?

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

A U.S. study found that eating more than seven eggs a week can raise your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes.

STUDY Don't get cracking every day. A large study has found that eating more than seven eggs a week can increase risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 77 per cent.

Researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard University in Boston analysed results from two previous large trials, the Physicians' Health Study and the Women's Health Study. The men's study followed more than 20,000 men for about 20 years and the women's study followed more than 36,000 participants for about 12 years. The subjects in both studies were asked to fill out food diaries and then their health was charted.

About 2,000 men and 2,000 women developed type 2 diabetes during the trials. Compared to men who had no eggs, men who had two to four eggs a week had an 18 per cent increase in risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

Men who ate more than seven eggs a week had a 58 per cent increased risk. In women, risk for developing diabetes rose 19 per cent if they ate two to four eggs a week and 77 per cent if they ate more than seven eggs per week.

Eggs contain cholesterol and fat, and this is why they are thought to raise diabetes risk.

Authors called for further studies to support these findings.

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Teens need sex education

The J Spot
Josey Vogels
Sex talk with Josey

In today's sexually saturated culture, kids are exposed to more information about sex than ever before, says our columnist.

Controversy over a British plan to offer contraceptive injections to teenage girls as young as 13 has the usual knickers in a twist. Critics are concerned the plan will promote underage sex and help spread sexually transmitted diseases.

It's the same argument that gets hauled out against sex education. As if young people never think about sex until an adult comes along, rips open a condom in front of them and shows them how to use it.

The truth is, in today's sexually-saturated culture, kids are exposed to more information about sex than ever before and sound, comprehensive sex education starting at a young age is crucial.

Besides, it seems to be working. Despite popular belief, in recent years, teenage pregnancy rates have fallen and the age of first sex has risen in both the U.S. and Canada. Even in England, teen pregnancies are down overall, except in high-risk, usually low-income areas that are being targeted for this program.

And even in these areas, sexual health care workers admit the vast majority of 13-year-olds are not sexually active and most of the teenage pregnancies they see happen at age 16 or 17.

Also, it's not like they're running around, capturing 13-year-olds and forcefully injecting them with Depo-Provera, the contraceptive being used for the program that prevents pregnancy for three months at a time. The injections are being offered by trained professionals that talk to these girls about why they are having sex and explain the risks of sexually transmitted infections.

Rather than panicking that we're encouraging girls as young as 13 to have sex by offering them contraception, isn't it better to admit that some are having sex and offer them education and options to ward off the consequences (that is, becoming a poor single, teenage mom)?

The other concern is that girls don't need parental consent to get the injection. But again, wouldn't you rather a young women be able to protect herself without telling her parents than go ahead and engage in risky activity because she needs parental consent to protect herself but is too scared to talk to them?

Providing comprehensive sex education and making contraception choices available to teens does not encourage promiscuity or the spread of STIs any more than urging people to wear seatbelts encourages risky driving and causes more accidents. If anything, it makes you more aware that the activity you are engaging in has serious consequences and that you can make individual choices to protect yourself against those consequences.

And nobody is ever too young to learn that.

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

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Twilight director snubbed
Twilight director Catherine Hardwicke has reportedly been turned down as director of the smash hit vampire film's sequel New Moon, despite vocalizing her desire to be involved with the project. IMDB.COM

Entertainment

New Order
Actor Jamie Bamber has returned to his native Britain to star in the latest Law & Order spinoff. Bamber will front Law & Order: London, the popular detective series' first international show. IMDB.COM

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

Tale of love, regret

Kate Winslet explores post-war guilt in The Reader

PHIL BROWN
for Metro Canada

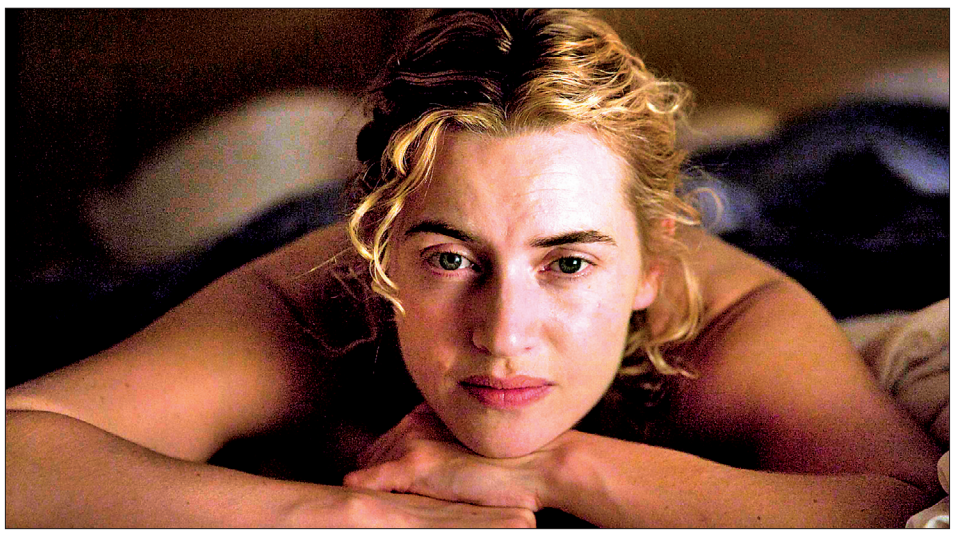
Based on a simple plot description, The Reader sounds like a conventional piece of Hollywood's end-of-the-year awards mongering. After all, it is a tragic love story told over the backdrop of the holocaust.

However, dismissing the movie on this level would do it a disservice. Much like the award-winning Bernhard Schlink novel that it's based on, the film is actually a morally complex story about the challenges that the young people of post-Second World War Germany faced when accepting the atrocities carried out by the previous generation.

The Reader might start as an Autumn/May romance between Kate Winslet and a young boy, but things change pretty drastically when the boy discovers that Winslet's character was once a guard at a concentration camp.

Dealing with the Holocaust and Germany's post-war guilt without needlessly moralizing or sentimentalizing the subject is no easy task, but director Stephen Daldry (The Hours) jumped at the opportunity.

"It was always something that I've wanted to do," says the director. "I hope audiences have as many different reactions as possible. I think it is a complex story and there is a great ambiguity to the book. One of the things we tried very hard to do was to maintain that ambiguity."



The Reader is a morally complex story about the challenges that the young people of post-Second World War Germany faced when accepting the atrocities carried out by the previous generation.

Daldry's approach to the material is certainly admirable, but his film never would have worked without a talented actress to take on the lead role of the illiterate, Nazi, cradle-robber Hannah Smitz. Kate Winslet was a fan of the book and the first choice for the role, but she almost missed out because of a scheduling conflict.

"The novel first came to my attention seven years ago," says Winslet. "I was absolutely gripped, compelled, and ultimately devastated by the novel. I knew that I wanted to do it, but logistics got in the way. The shooting of Revolutionary Road conflicted and we couldn't work it out.

"Then it became Nichole Kidman's role until she became unavailable because of her pregnancy, the schedule was shifted and the role opened up for me again. I just felt so lucky that happened."

However, despite how much she clearly enjoyed playing the role, even Winslet refuses to forgive the atrocities of her own character.

"My job as the actress is to understand the character and ultimately love them. And I did love Hannah, because I understood her profoundly. Did I sympathize with her? Yes, but that doesn't mean that I sympathize with SS guards in general, not at all. I don't forgive her.

"But that's what I love about the film. It's not a film about forgiveness or reconciliation. It's a story about regret, because you don't choose who you fall in love with."

The Reader opens in theatres Friday.

Dance crown for Nico

RICK MCGINNIS
Metro Canada

After 13 weeks moving slowly toward centre stage on the biggest TV show in Canada, Montreal's Nico Archambault became the first winner of the homegrown version of So You Think You Can Dance, though talking to him a day after his win, he admits he was sure he was going home weeks ago.

"I never felt safe," he tells me. "You can get a lot of praise and then if you mess up the next week you're done. I have to say after my waltz I thought I was going to leave. The standard ballroom is hard. For a start, it's not really entertaining, and it looks easy, but it's not. People say 'why did you mess it up, it looks so easy.'"

With a background in hip hop and contemporary, he says that he felt like he had the basics to take on the show's weekly challenges, but that his first big test came right after he made it into the top 10. "The first week I picked salsa, which is totally new to me, and I'm partnering the Cuban girl (Arrasay Reyes)," he recalls. "But she was really good, and she was patient and really helped me."

RICK MCGINNIS/METRO CANADA

Nico Archambault

Looking back, the standard ballroom dances were his biggest challenge, coming from a place utterly different from his training and taste, but he answers immediately when I ask him about what scared him the most. "It's gotta be the quickstep," he says. "To me all the standard ballroom looked boring — I have to say it. But the show forces you to step into it, to embrace it ... And by doing it I realized how hard it is — it's not natural for a body to look like that, and to move with another body."

Archambault's next gig is the cross-Canada tour for the show.

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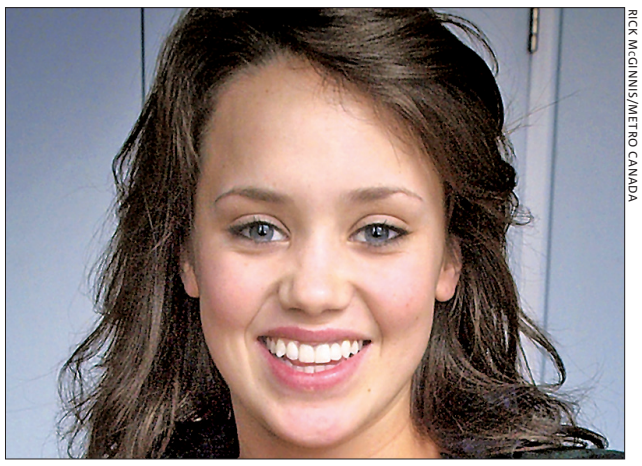


RICK McGINNIS/METRO CANADA

Classically-trained dancer Allie Bertram was named the runner-up of So You Think You Can Dance Canada.

‘Little mouse’ roars into runner-up spot

Ballerina defies expectations in dance competition

RICK McGINNIS
rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

From her first moment on-stage, Calgary’s Allie Bertram had a singular role in the cast of dancers dancing together and in competition for the winner’s circle in So You Think You Can Dance Canada.

Petite and sweet-tempered, the 18-year-old became judge Luther Brown’s “little mouse,” and her classical training was actually considered a liability.

After all, a ballerina had never made it into the show’s final 10, never mind runner-up to Nico Archambault at the show’s finale.

“I was comfortable with it,” she says, looking back. “That’s who I am, and that’s truly who I came into this competition as, and I thought it was great that he was talking about me as his little ballerina, as I was doing these Latin dances or these hip hop dances. I’m true to myself, but I’m adapting myself to these different styles.”

She admits that she had to escape a lot of habits drilled into her after years of training. “I think it was letting go. I’m used to standing upright. Especially during our first hip hop with Danny (Arbour) it was so hard for me to get out of character and be mean or tough.

“But by the time I did my second hip hop I was so ready. You have to learn how to be different characters — in ballet you’re always pretty, whereas in this you have to change your mindset.

“I have the technical training, but I have the mindset that you have to jump into it and try new things. Not that I think ballerinas don’t have that, but you get so set in your style. Anyone who’s willing to do the show has to forget about what they do best and adapt to anything.

She says that right now, she’s anxious for the show’s tour to begin. “Honestly I can’t wait — to get back together with the top 10, I’m going to be so excited. I’ve never been on tour before, especially across Canada.”

Madonna wins case against U.K. tabloid

IN COURT Madonna, always in fighting shape, has won a round against the British press. The pop star won a judgment yesterday against a British tabloid that she accused of breaching her privacy and copyright by publishing pictures of her 2000 wedding.

Madonna, who says the pictures were stolen by an interior decorator from her home in Beverly Hills, Calif., is seeking damages from the publishers of the Mail on Sunday. Judge David Eady entered a judgment in her favour but deferred a decision on compensation until the new year. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Christie Hefner will leave dad’s empire

PUBLISHING Playboy Enterprises says Christie Hefner, the daughter of founder Hugh Hefner, is stepping down as chairman and chief executive. Playboy Enterprises Inc. has named Director Jerome Kern to serve as interim non-executive chairman while it looks for a replacement.

Hefner joined Playboy in 1975 and was named chairman and chief executive officer in 1988. She’ll stay on as CEO until Jan. 31 and remain on the board until a new CEO joins the firm.

In October, Playboy said it would cut 55 and eliminate 25 vacant positions. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DVD picks

The Dark Knight

Director: Christopher Nolan
Rating: 14A

PLENTY OF FANS shelled out more than once to see The Dark Knight in theatres multiple times. They might wind up doing the same on home video given how the studio is skimping with the extras on the initial DVD and Blu-ray releases.

The overseers at Warner Bros. clearly sense that after everyone pays up to get their own copy of the movie, many will fork over more cash down the line for whatever extras-loaded special editions that inevitably follow later.

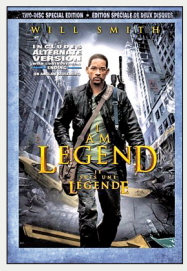
Fans probably will consider it a bargain just to get their hands on the year's biggest blockbuster, which elevated the superhero genre to new critical and commercial highs as Batman (Christian Bale) battles his inner demons and the sadistic schemes of his greatest foe, the Joker (Heath Ledger).

The two-disc DVD and Blu-ray releases have a behind-the-scenes segment, episodes of the Gotham Tonight news show featured in the movie and a digital copy of the film for portable video players.

The Blu-ray also has a featurette on Batman's gadgets and a psychological study of the conflicted hero. A single-disc DVD version comes with just the movie. At some point, Warner is bound to unleash other versions that flesh out the behind-the-scenes materials.

I Am Legend

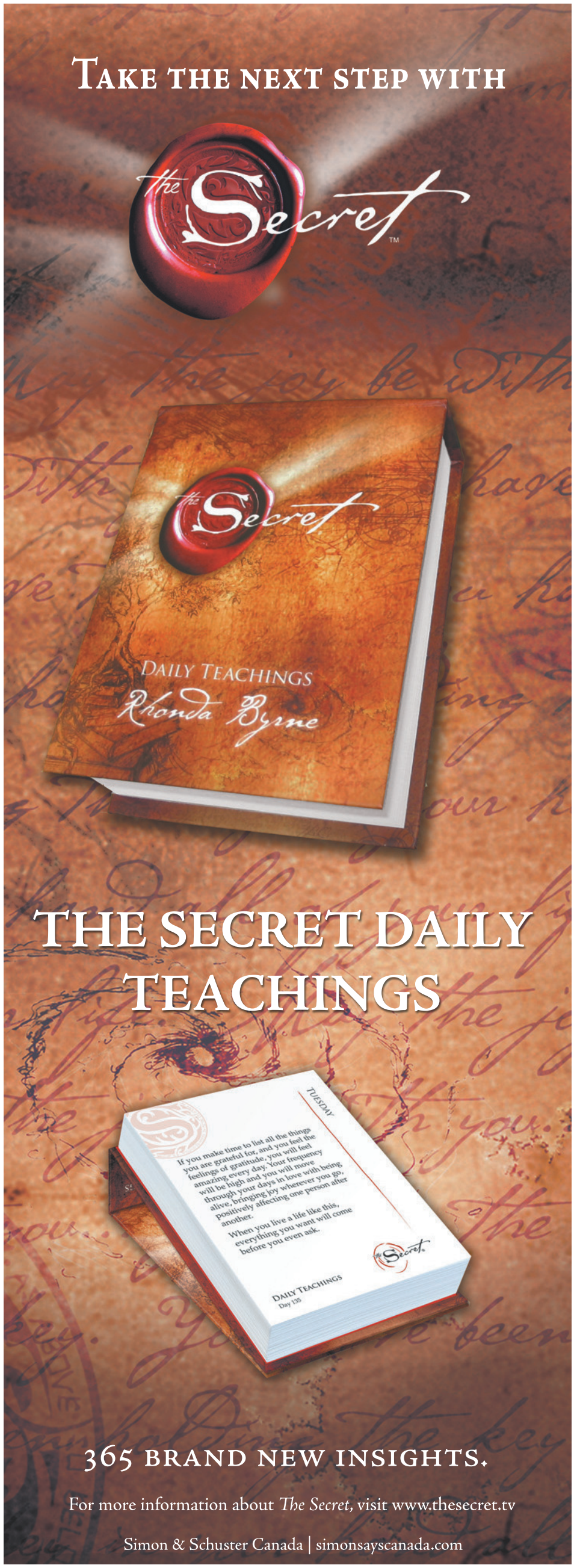
Director: Francis Lawrence
Rating: 14A



WILL SMITH'S apocalyptic sci-fi smash gets a classy boxed-set makeover with a three-disc DVD and two-disc Blu-ray Ultimate Collector's Edition, including two versions of the movie, the theatrical release and a cut with an alternate ending. Previously filmed as Vincent Price's The Last Man on Earth and Charlton Heston's The Omega Man, the story features Smith as a scientist seeking a cure for the global plague that killed most of humanity and turned the rest into ravenous mutants.

The oversized sets include animated comics centred on other plague survivors, a dozen deleted scenes, and a huge range of behind-the-scenes segments, plus a 44-page book. The sets also have filmmaker commentary and a digital copy of the movie. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

For more DVD reviews, visit metronews.ca.



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Bear Grylls recovering after fall
Man Vs. Wild star Bear Grylls is recovering in a U.K. hospital after fracturing his shoulder in a fall while on an expedition across Antarctica. IMDB.COM

TV execs face high school drama

IntelleVision

"Craig Plestis, the man in charge of NBC's reality programs, was let go because, well, do I need to utter the dread words Baby Borrowers aloud?"

THE NETWORK THAT WENT CRAZY: I'm not sure how much readers care about the Rome-at-empire's-end court politics at the number four U.S. network; I write about TV five days a week, so it's probably no surprise that this sort of flailing folly of backstabbing and corporate intrigue fascinated me.

Perhaps it's a sort of emotional Stockholm Syndrome, which has left me in thrall to the beat that holds me captive, but the success of shows like Entourage tells me that I might not be alone.

My source, as usual, is Nikki Finke of L.A. Weekly, whose fascination with Ben Silverman's tenure as co-chairman of NBC entertainment and television makes mine seem restrained. Following up on her earlier predictions of heads rolling in time for the holidays, she managed to preempt Silverman's own attempt to hide the firing of three senior programming executives in the hurly-burly of holiday news.

"The network/studio hoped to then spin this as part of cost-cutting rather than more evidence of failure," writes Finke. "But I messed up their plans. My bad."

The basic news is that NBC management has shifted the blame for their underperforming season on two women and one man — the heads of executive vice-president of NBC Entertainment, the president of Universal Studio Media and the head of reality programming respectively.

Katherine Pope had wanted to leave the network for a year, ever since half of her job at Universal Studio Media was given away, and Teri Weinberg, who was brought to the company by Silverman, has been marked for death ever since the network had to give a sweetheart kiss-off deal to a group of writer/producers, one of whom was Weinberg's boyfriend.

Craig Plestis, the man in charge of NBC's reality programs, was let go because, well, do I need to utter the dread words Baby Borrowers aloud?

When things are as bad as they've become for NBC, rational explanations no longer hold sway — Pope was apparently more than competent at what she did (she had ameliorated Law & Order creator Dick Wolf's frayed relationship with the network), but Silverman apparently hated her, while Silverman's bullet-proof status can be explained as a simple by-product of General Electric CEO Jeffrey Immelt's fondness for his favorite executive party boy.

For his part, Silverman is bringing in Paul Telegdy from the BBC to take Plestis' job so that Silverman will feel like he has "another dude" and "more friends" around him, according to Finke. Proof, were it needed, that high school never really ends, just summer vacation.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

Cowell won't stop critiques: Abdul

REALITY TV Paula Abdul insists fellow American Idol judge Simon Cowell will continue to scathingly critique performers on the show despite the alleged suicide of a former contestant, imdb.com reports. Paula Goodspeed took a suspected drug overdose in her car in Sherman Oaks, Calif., on Nov. 11. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Swift, Brothers to ring in new year

TELEVISION The Jonas Brothers, Taylor Swift and Lionel Richie will ring in 2009 from Times Square on Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve.

They will perform live during the ABC broadcast, joining Clark in New York along with his co-host Ryan Seacrest, the network announced. Kellie Pickler also will be on hand in Times Square with live reports on the festivities.

As previously announced, Natasha Bedingfield, Fall Out Boy, Jesse McCartney, Ne-Yo, Pussycat Dolls, Solange and Robin Thicke will perform during the Hollywood Party segments, which will be hosted by Fergie. A New Year's Eve tradition, the show will begin Dec. 31 at 10 p.m.

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TO	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime 12/9/08	265	353	2	TVO	Blue Realm		The Agenda With Steve Paikin		The Street		The Choir (Part 1 of 4)		Agenda-Paikin
	211	331	3	GTV	ET Canada	Entertainment	House (HDTV) (N)		(9:01) NCIS (HDTV)		Kitchen Nightmares		News (N)
	215	343	4	OMN1	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons	News (N)		Vivere Il	News (N)	The Simpsons	King of the Hill	Metropia
	210	302	6	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Legend of Frosty		The Tudors (N)		CBC News: The National		The Hour
	214	344	7	CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Privileged (HDTV)		According-Jim	According-Jim	Hates Chris	Friends	News (N)
	212	313	8	CTV	etalk	Hollywood	*Shrek* ★★★ (2001, Comedy) Voices of Mike Myers.				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	218	345	11	E!	The Insider (N)	E! News	The Biggest Loser: Families (N)				The Best Years (DVS)		News (N)
	137	763	13	TFO	Panorama		Canada	Villages	*La Religieuse* ★★★ (1966, Drame) Anna Karina, Lilo Pulver.				Astroboy
	-	-	14	-	Cold Case		News (N)		News (N)		Two/Half Men	King	Cold Case
	213	326	15	SUN	Scrubs	George Lopez	*Secret Santa* ★★ (2003, Drama) Jennie Garth.				To Serve and Protect		Grill Rm.
	-	387	16	CBS	Inside Edition	Hollywood	NCIS "About Face"		The Mentalist (HDTV)		Without a Trace (HDTV)		News (N)
	-	385	17	NBC	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	The Biggest Loser: Families (N)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	-	386	18	ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Funniest Home Videos		According-Jim	According-Jim	Eli Stone "Help!" (N)		News
	219	346	20	ACH-B	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Funniest Home Videos		(9:01) Fringe (HDTV)		Eli Stone "Help!" (N)		News (N)
	-	-	28	FOX	Judge Judy (N)	Two/Half Men	House (HDTV) (N)		(9:01) Fringe (HDTV)		Seinfeld	Two/Half Men	The Simpsons
	-	388	61	PBS	News-Lehrer	Keeping Up	Nova The Old Testament and how the concept of one God emerged. (DVS)						Business Rpt.
	297	652	330	WPX	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	90210 (HDTV)		Privileged (HDTV)		CW11 News at Ten (N)		Two/Half Men
	296	654	331	SBK	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Dr. Phil (HDTV)		WBZ News (N)	'70s Show	Frasier	Frasier	Punk'd
	298	653	332	TLA	Jamie Foxx	Wayans Bros.	My Wife-Kids	According-Jim	Family Guy	Family Guy	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	90210
news	502	390	26	NW	CBC News	Newman	The Hour		CBC News: The National		Capturing a Short Life		National
	500	500	33	CNN	Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias		Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (HDTV)		
	509	504	79	CNB	CNBC Reports				On the Money		The Big Idea With Deutsch		Mad Money
sports	405	417	22	net	World Combat League		The Ultimate Fighter		Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Connected		Sportsnet Con.
	400	400	30	TSN	NBA Basketball Toronto Raptors at Cleveland Cavaliers. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre		That's Hockey!	SportsCentre
	411	457	58	OLN	Ed's Up	Videos	Survivorman		Angry Planet	Word Travels	Which Way to... "Luxor"		Pilot Guides
	417	406	81	SC	Pinks	Pass Time	Low Life	Low Life	Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Unique Whips	Hot Import	Pinks
family	551	542	25	YTV	Malcolm-Mid.	Home Improve.	Fresh Prince	Sabrina-Witch	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Adrenaline Proj	Mystery Hnt.
	554	544	45	TEL	Santa Claus	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show		Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	American Dad	Robot Chicken	Rick & Steve
	556	540	51	FAM	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
cable variety	602	567	27	W	Will & Grace	Friends	How to Look Good Naked		Style by Jury	Style by Jury	How to Look Good Naked (N)		Maxed Out
	570	580	29	MM	Degrassi: Next	Instant Star	disBand	Technical Diff.	So You Think You Can Dance Canada				MuchTopTens
	615	520	31	A&E	The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48 (HDTV) (N)		Manhunters	Manhunters	Jacked: Theft
	700	800	35	TLN	Centrovetrine	Sky TG 24	Serie A	Magnifica Italia	Nati Ieri		Raymond	Raymond	George Lopez
	571	581	36	MMM	mmmtop	Where You At	Listed		Popaganda		Don't Forget the Lyrics!		Party of Five
	575	583	38	CMT	Canada Countdown		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Cheerleaders
	616	521	39	SHO	About a Girl	About a Girl	The Best Years (DVS)		Testees	Trailer Park	House "Insensitive"		House
	620	523	40	BVO	Desperate Housewives		Live at the Rehearsal Hall		Barenaked for the Holidays		Christmas at the Concert Hall		Law & Order
	601	562	41	SLC	Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	Wedding SOS	In Laws	Rich Bride, Poor Bride		Tori & Dean: Home		ET Canada
	522	506	43	HIS	NCIS "Silver War"		Outlaw Bikers		Ax Men		NCIS "Silver War"		Crime Stories
	625	548	44	COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	S. Silverman	Flt.-Conchords	Daily Show
	600	564	46	H&G	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Pure Design	Style	Sarah's House	Design Inc.	Colin & Justin's Home Heist		Holmes-Homes
	294	529	47	TBS	House-Payne	House-Payne	*Blood Work* ★★ (2002, Suspense) Clint Eastwood, Jeff Daniels.					Seinfeld	Family Guy
	576	582	49	BET	106 & Park	*ATL* ★★ (2006, Comedy-Drama) Tip "T.I." Harris, Lauren London.					Keyshia Cole	Brother	Judge Hatchett
	627	528	50	SPC	Lost		Star Trek: Next Gener.		Battlestar Galactica		Rabbit Fall (N)	The Circuit	Stargate SG-1
	581	566	52	MTV	Busted	After	MTV News	Cribs	Shot at Love-Tila Tequila		A Double Shot of Love		MTV Live
	618	524	54	TROP	Beverly Hills, 90210		Planet Soap	What Happen?	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	King	Family Guy
	603	561	56	FOOD	The Main	Chef at Home	Restaurant Makeover		The F Word		Chef School	At the Table	Restaurant
	261	394	60	V	Murder, She Wrote		Bless-Father	On the Buses	Quantum Leap		Quantum Leap		Mysterious Wy
	621	527	63	STR	The Ellen DeGeneres Show		TMZ (N)	etalk	Ultimate Super Heroes-Villains		The Tonight Show-Jay Leno		TMZ
	553	546	65	TRE	Angelina Bal.	Nght Grdn	Toot & Puddle	Franklin	Little Bear	Maggie-Beast	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie Olie	Beren. Bears
	115	711	101	TVA	Les Anges de la rénovation		Dr. House (HDTV) (SC)		La Promesse (HDTV) (N) (SC)		TVA 22 heures	(10:45) La Vraie nature	
	126	730	102	RDI	24 Heures en 60 minutes				Le Téléjournal (SC)		RDI en direct	Le National	Le Téléjournal
	526	507	249	VIVA	Judging Amy		Commander In Chief		The West Wing		Encounters	In Dreams	Psychic Inv.
	300	601	301	M1	*Jane*	(7:25) *Grindstone Road* (2008)			*Untraceable* ★★ (2008, Suspense)			(10:45) *The Invisible*	
	305	612	306	PIX	(6:50) *Calendar* ★★ (1993, Drama) Arsinée Khanjian.				*To Die For* ★★★ (1995, Comedy-Drama) Nicole Kidman.				*Exotica*

critics' corner

Christmas at the Concert Hall
Yes, there's an awful lot of holiday music on the tube. But this new special is one worth checking out, as it's got a nice variety of artists, including Holly Cole, Ed Robertson, Hawksley Workman and Serena Ryder, performing seasonal favorites from this charming new Bravo! venue. 10 PM on BVO

Barenaked for the Holidays
No, nobody is getting naked in this special. A repeat holiday favorite, the band Barenaked Ladies performs songs from its CD of holiday tunes. Numbers include original Christmas songs, skewed versions of traditional ones and a few of the group's standards. 9 PM on BVO

Without a Trace
The team tries to locate a lottery winner who went missing shortly after becoming a millionaire. Jack (Anthony LaPaglia) gets some unpleasant surprises when he investigates Brian Donovan (Adam Kaufman), the father of Sam's (Poppy Montgomery) baby. Eric Close also stars in "A Dollar and a Dream." 10 PM on CBS

Steve-O to try hand at Dancing With The Stars
Jackass star Steve-o has been tapped as the next celebrity to join the cast of the hit TV show Dancing With The Stars, according to reports. IMDB.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Lohan's pricey leggings a hit

CLOTHING Actress Lindsay Lohan has managed to defy the global economic downturn — her new line of leggings have sold out in boutiques across the world, imdb.com reports.

The products from her 6126 collection range in price from $44 to $132 US, have become bestsellers.

The leggings come in 35 colours and patterns and are also said to have scored record sales in U.S. stores including Henri Bendel, Nordstrom, Intermix and Lisa Kline.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Dane rescues injured pooch

PEOPLE Grey's Anatomy star Eric Dane nursed an injured chihuahua back to health when the little dog's guardian tossed her from a moving car, imdb.com reports.

The pooch suffered a broken leg and was limping around L.A.'s Larchmont shopping district when Dane spotted it.

"My wife thought I was the sweetest guy in the world for taking that dog, until I told her to take care of the dog."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

I'll strip down for Bertolucci: Emma

CAREER Actress Emma Watson is willing to be naked on the big screen, as long as she is directed by acclaimed filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci, imdb.com reports.

The Harry Potter star says she would be happy to bare all on screen for any roles offered her way, but would prefer Stealing Beauty director Bertolucci to be behind the camera.

But, she adds, "I'm not getting my kit off any time soon, but it is part of my job."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Allen renounces party-girl ways

PEOPLE Don't expect one-time party girl Lily Allen to stumble out of a club anytime soon, People.com reports.

"I've become a character in a comic … and that character is always drunk! I wish my comic character wasn't that," the singer told the U.K.'s Observer Music Monthly.

Allen claims she's been off alcohol "since 22 September," and doesn't plan on indulging again — at least for now.

"I have no intention of taking drugs again at the moment," she said. "But I can't say 'Never again,' because I don't know where I'll be in 10 years' time. And I will definitely drink in the future, just not for awhile."

Gearing up for the release of her second studio album It's Not Me, It's You, the 23-year-old continues to battle insecurities with her weight and appearance.

"My mum always told me, 'You're beautiful, you're my beautiful little girl,' and then suddenly I wasn't," she said. "I read all the stuff that people were writing about me and I started to get a different view. I mean, I never thought I was supermodel or anything, but I didn't think I was quite as unattractive as people were saying!"

Meanwhile in another interview, Allen said her friend, singer Amy Winehouse, whom she knows "very well," is different from how she's portrayed.

"(She's) a very clever, intelligent, witty, funny person who can hold it together," she said. "You just don't see that side. She gets a really hard time." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Money woes may have ruined union

BREAKUP Actress Jodie Sweetin's marriage to Cody Herpin broke down following the near foreclosure of their home and a range of money woes, according to U.S. reports.

The former Full House star, 26, filed for legal separation from Herpin, 31, in November, just seven months after giving birth to the couple's first child, imdb.com reports.

The pair had even announced plans for a reality show, based on their family life, before the split.

In court documents, obtained by People.com, Sweetin blames her estranged husband's lack of employment as the main factor behind their relationship troubles.

"Our house is in foreclosure, our water has been shut off twice. Currently, all of our other utilities are overdue," Sweetin states. "(Herpin) kept finding one excuse after another for his failure to even attempt to find employment."

According to People.com, Sweetin also claims the couple were surviving from residuals from Full House re-runs and help from her parents.

Sweetin has filed for joint custody of their baby daughter Zoie.

A hearing for the case is set for Feb. 9.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Aniston proves critical acting teacher wrong

CAREER Jennifer Aniston partly owes her success to a harsh teacher who insisted she'd never make it as an actress, imdb.com reports.

The former Friends star was ridiculed and slated by the coach during her school days, and set out to prove him wrong.

"I was in the High School of Performing Arts and my acting coach told me that I was a disgrace to the Moscow Theatre," Aniston says.

"I was determined to prove him wrong and do good work."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

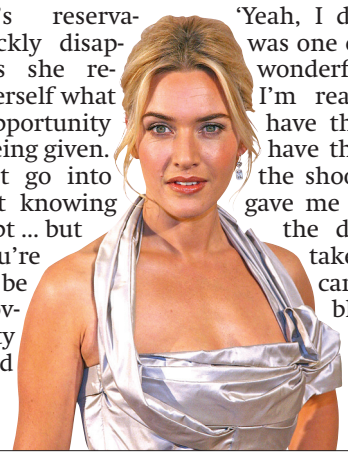
Kate dismisses photo op qualms

PEOPLE Kate Winslet balked at the idea of stripping off for a new Vanity Fair photo shoot until she realized photographer Steven Meisel, the man behind the shots in Madonna's Sex book, would be behind the lens, imdb.com reports.

The actress had no idea she'd be baring all until magazine bosses hit her with the concept on the day of the shoot.

Winslet's reservations quickly disappeared as she reminded herself what a great opportunity she was being given.

"I didn't go into that shoot knowing the concept … but when you're asked to be on the cover of Vanity Fair and photographed by Steven Meisel, it's a wonderful thing to experience," she says. "It's a fantastic opportunity just to be able to have that memory in your lifetime … I thought, 'Yeah, dammit, I am; I'm 33, I've had two kids, Steven Meisel is taking pictures of me naked. This is never gonna happen again!' I transported myself 30 years on and I wanted to be able to say, 'Yeah, I did that.' That was one of those crazy, wonderful things and I'm really happy to have that memory. I have the prints from the shoot that Steven gave me at the end of the day that were taken out of the camera and were blown up."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Hubby wants $1.46M from Amy?

BREAKUP The husband of singer Amy Winehouse is reportedly demanding a $1.46-million US payoff to keep quiet about their marriage, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Blake Fielder-Civil vowed last month to split from Winehouse to help her win her alleged struggle with drugs. But according to a British tabloid, he has now demanded cash from the singer's manager and threatened to write a tell-all book about his relationship with Winehouse if he isn't paid.

"He's so two-faced. He just wants a payoff. Money's his driving force," a source tells Britain's News of the World.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Belonging to men sexy: Eva

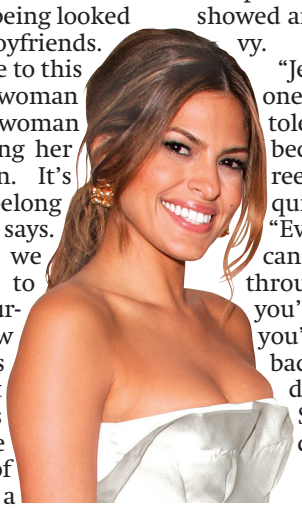
DATING Eva Mendes thinks "belonging" to a man is sexy, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress, who is in a relationship with producer George Gargurevich, loves the feeling of being looked after by her boyfriends.

"The flip side to this strong career woman you see is a woman who loves being her man's woman. It's just sexy to belong to a man," she says. "Of course, we don't belong to anyone but ourselves, but how boring. There's a certain part of me that's like, 'Please take care of me'. It's just a natural thing. But I'm not sure if every woman has it."

Mendes also said she hates jealous men and would instantly end a relationship if her partner showed any signs of envy.

"Jealousy is the one thing I can't tolerate in a guy because of my career," she tells Esquire magazine. "Everything else can be talked through, but if you're jealous, you're holding me back and I can't do what I love. So that's a deal-breaker."



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Wednesday Rain and snow 4° / -11° 60%
Thursday Variable -8°/ -10°
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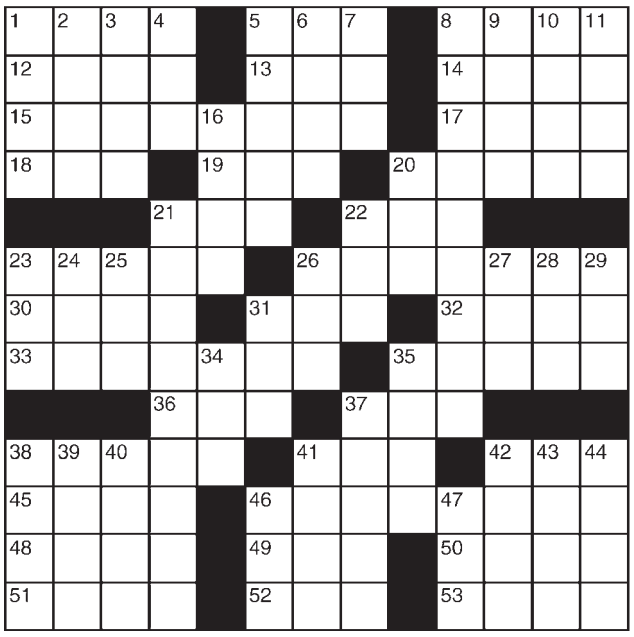

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

6								3
1			5		8			6
		9	3	2	6	4		
	8		6		4		7	
	9						3	
	6		9		7		8	
		2	8	1	3	7		
9			7		5			8
3								5

Crossword across

1 Group of actors
5 Where Goldilocks was found
8 Tracy or Cheney
12 Leer at
13 "— not choose to run"
14 Inactive
15 "Silent Cal"
17 Peruse
18 Birthday card info
19 Palin portrayer on "SNL"
20 Goes nowhere
21 Toward the stern
22 Purchase
23 Popeye's burger-eating chum
26 Small car
30 State
31 Candle matter
32 Smell
33 Dweller
35 Harrelson of "Cheers"
36 Cover
37 Crony
38 Air current
41 Wahine's neckwear
42 Ring decision
45 Lira replacer
46 Backyard structure
48 Building-block name
49 A billion years
50 Pay attention
51 Pedestal occupant
52 Poehler or Yasbeck
53 Congers, e.g.

Crossword down

1 Caesar's TV co-star
2 Enthusiastic, plus
3 — gin fizz
4 Aviv lead-in
5 Lavatory fixture
6 Nervous
7 Fawn's mama
8 Cheating
9 Notion
10 Sculpture medium
11 Sneakers brand
16 Dubious
20 Total
21 Prankster's cry
22 Carton
23 Bankroll
24 "— Got a Secret"
25 Chaps
26 Drop from the payroll
27 Big bother
28 Massachusetts cape
29 Take a whack at
31 Marry
34 Acne evidence
35 Banshee's call
37 Garden
38 Sandwich shop
39 Regretted
40 Jason's ship
41 Appear ominously
42 Quaker's address
43 Carina
44 Probability
46 Afternoon get-together
47 That woman

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

H	A	M	■	■	F	O	B	■	C	H	A	D		
E	P	I	C	■	C	A	L	■	H	O	S	E		
R	I	C	H	■	C	H	I	■	A	P	S	E		
R	E	H	A	B	■	U	S	S	R	■	■	■		
■	■	■	R	E	D	■	S	U	L	T	A	N		
B	O	I	L	E	R	S	■	P	I	A	N	O		
A	N	T	I	■	Y	E	A	■	E	R	N	E		
S	T	E	E	L	■	C	R	Y	S	T	A	L		
S	O	M	B	E	R	■	M	A	H	■	■	■		
■	■	■	R	E	D	■	K	E	B	A	B	■		
Z	E	R	O	■	A	I	L	■	E	R	G	O		
A	V	O	W	■	C	R	Y	■	N	E	R	O		
P	E	O	N	■	T	E	E	■	■	D	A	B		

5	4	7	9	2	1	6	8	3
8	3	6	7	4	5	1	9	2
2	1	9	3	8	6	5	4	7
1	8	2	5	6	7	9	3	4
4	6	3	1	9	8	2	7	5
7	9	5	4	3	2	8	1	6
6	5	4	8	1	3	7	2	9
9	2	8	6	7	4	3	5	1
3	7	1	2	5	9	4	6	8

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Lamb Racks with Garlic And Rosemary

INGREDIENTS:
4 lamb racks (with 3 cutlets per rack)
2 garlic cloves, sliced
2 long sprigs of fresh rosemary
1 tbsp (15 mL) honey
2 tbsp (25 mL) grainy mustard
2 tbsp (25 mL) mint sauce

METHOD:
1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Trim excess fat from lamb racks. Cut small slits in top of lamb with a small, sharp knife. Insert slices of garlic and small pieces of rosemary into slits. Sit lamb on a plate.
2. Whisk together honey, grainy mustard and mint sauce, and brush over lamb racks. Marinate for 20 minutes in a cool place.
3. Put lamb racks into a baking dish and spoon on sauce that may be left on plate. Bake for 20 minutes for medium-rare, or until cooked to your liking, basting a couple of times during cooking with honey-mustard mixture.
4. Remove from oven and let stand, covered, in a warm place for 10 minutes to allow juices to be absorbed back into meat. Either cut lamb into individual cutlets or leave rack intact and serve as is.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
A lively person makes headway with a sad guy. There'll be much ado about nothing. Euphoria figures prominently in your plans.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Your thrill-seeking ways will be discussed. Disturbing feelings will cause distress. A friend relies on your sensible advice.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Avoid spending too much time seeking good luck. Relationship issues will be cleared up. An improvement causes second thoughts.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A lively friend's emotions should be investigated. The least said about a problem, the better. Gossip is overheard by a busybody.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A relationship improves after someone gets his first choice. Desperate measures will be taken. Chatter about your objectives comes up.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Time passes too quickly when you're arguing. Someone will agonize over forgiveness. Defensive strategies will be maddening.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Protect children from hypocritical behaviour. You will have a few hours of hopefulness. Prepare for an unconventional gift.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A crisis is the foundation of future opportunities. Someone will have mechanical problems. A senior will interfere with an appointment.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
A desired object will seem flawed. Unleash The Force on a second-rate bore. Be cool when you're correct about an intolerant person.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
An insomniac will reveal too much. Prepare to investigate a death for its relevance. Expect to get a surprising message.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
You'll be on top of the world. A certain situation will help to pay your bills. A dispute will be erased by an affable associate.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
A dream about the news will come true. A rebellion against routine activity occurs. A peacemaker's persona won't be comforting.

This day in history

DEC. 9, 1851: The first YMCA in North America is established in Montreal, Quebec.
DEC. 9, 1905: In France, the law separating church and state is passed.
DEC. 9, 1953: Red Scare: General Electric announces that all communist employees will be discharged from the company.
DEC. 9, 1965: The Kecksburg UFO incident: A fireball is seen from Michigan to Pennsylvania; witnesses report something crashing in the woods near Pittsburgh. In 2005, NASA admits it examined an object.

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